The Buddha and His Disciples

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Taking a different perspective from the usual biographies of the Buddha, the author retells the great man's story using the society of the time as the backdrop and the Buddha's interactions with his contemporaries as the main theme. We discover what the Buddha was like as a person, how he taught and how he changed the lives of all who were blessed enough to come into contact with him.

Venerable Shravasti Dhammika was born in Australia in 1951. He was ordained as a Buddhist monk in India and later lived in Sri Lanka, where he became well-known for his efforts to promote Buddhism. In 1985, he moved to Singapore, where he was the spiritual advisor to the Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society and several other Buddhist groups. Venerable Dhammika taught at the Education Department's Curriculum Development Institute and also made several television films for the Institute. A prolific writer, his other books include *Encounters With Buddhism*, *How To Protect Yourself From Cults*, *All About Buddhism*, and *Middle Land Middle Way*.

The BDMS is dedicated to making known the teachings of the Buddha and encouraging its members to apply these teachings to their lives.

The Society prints books and organises public talks, meditation sessions and other Dhamma activities from time to time. For more information, visit 567A Balestier Road, Singapore 1232, or ring 352-2859.

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Introduction

The life of the Buddha is more than an account of one man's quest for and realisation of the truth; it is also about the people who encountered that man during his forty-five year career and how their encounter transformed them. If the Buddha's quest and his encounters with others is set against the backdrop of the world in which these events were acted out, a world with its unique customs, its political intrigue and its religious ferment, it becomes one of the most fascinating stories ever told. One will meet with proud kings and humble outcastes, with saffron-robed monks (some saintly, others all too human), with generous patrons and jealous rivals. Some of the events in the Buddha's life are described by scholars as being 'legendary', but if we look at them objectively, few of them could be considered implausible. One might be tempted to dismiss Angulimala's practice of cutting a finger from each of his victims as unbelievable, but the criminal history of mankind furnishes us with ample evidence of behaviour far more bizarre and gruesome than that. Samavati's rapid rise from destitution to royalty is certainly unusual but it is well within the realm of possibility. Devadatta's plots might be slightly exaggerated, and certainly as they have been recorded in the Vinaya they are in the wrong sequence, but they are just the sort of thing we could expect from a highly talented

and at the same time highly jealous and ambitious person. And moving like a cool breeze through all this drama is the Buddha, patient, smiling and unmistakably real.

The oldest and most authentic information we have about the Buddha's life is to be found in the Pali Tipitaka, not in any chronological order, but scattered here and there, like specks of gold in the bed of a sandy river. Less reliable but nonetheless sometimes helpful is the information in the Pali commentaries, especially the Dhammapada Atthakta and the Jataka Nidanakatha. After that, we have the Mahayana sutras in which the historical Buddha begins to recede from view behind a veil of legends and romance, becoming less and less accessible as he does. We are human, imperfectly human, and if we are to transcend this state we will need a guide and an ideal that is both human and perfect. The Buddha is such a guide and ideal and in the Pali Tipitaka he is portrayed as such. Thus the story of the Buddha and his disciples as told in Pali sources is not just an authentic and fascinating one, it is also one that has a spiritual significance.

Dozens of books on the Buddha's life have been published, two of the best only recently. They are *The Historical Buddha* by H W Schumann and *The Buddha* by Michael Carrithers. Both of these books admirably avoid the extremes of including too much of what is obviously mythological on one hand and on the other taking the dry-as-dust academic approach which, being conceived

without faith, is unable to inspire faith in the reader. Unfortunately, neither of these books is widely available in local bookshops. The only locally written life of the Buddha that likewise avoids these extremes is *The Life of Gotama The Buddha* by Venerable B Dhammaratana and Senarath Vijayasundara. However, as this well-written little book is out of print, a new and more complete account of the Buddha's life is justified.

The Buddha and His Disciples is the second in what will eventually be a series of three textbooks to be used by the Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society's Introductory Dhamma Course. The Course has so far proved to be popular amongst Singaporeans and this book will, I hope, add to its value. I would like to thank Doris Teo and Donna Pang for all the help they gave in preparing this book. The illustrations designed by Eric Yeo have enlivened this text as did his earlier designs for the first volume in the series. Thanks are due also to the many people who have assisted in innumerable ways.

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The Land Of The Rose Apple

1. Although the Dhamma is a direct outcome of the Buddha's own understanding, the form in which it was proclaimed to the world was, of course, very much influenced by the culture in which the Buddha lived. Therefore, some understanding of this culture will help to give a better understanding of the Dhamma.

2. India is a huge, wedge-shaped sub-continent with the Arabian Sea to its west, the Andaman Sea to its east and the snowy peaks of the Himalayas to its north. In ancient times it was known as the land of the Rose Apple (*Jambudipa*). The Buddha was born and lived all his life in north-central India in the area known then as the Middle Land (*Majjhima Desa*), so called because it was believed to be, by the people who lived there, the centre of the earth. The whole area consists of a vast, flat, fertile plain through which flow two great rivers, the Ganges and the Yamuna, and many smaller rivers. There are three seasons – summer, when the temperature can reach as high as 40°; the rainy season, when the rivers flood and travel becomes difficult; and the winter, when the days can be pleasant but the nights can be freezing. In the Buddha's time, large areas of northern India were covered by jungle and the people who lived in the many villages that bordered the jungles often encountered

lions, elephants, deer, rhinoceros and other wild animals.

The population of this northern part of India was much smaller than it is today; there was plenty of arable land for farming and most people had more than enough to eat. Even very poor farmers could supplement their diet or income by hunting wild animals and collecting the abundant fruits that the forests provided.

3. The India the Buddha knew was not a single political unit but rather a collection of independent countries, often vying with each other for supremacy. The largest and most powerful of these countries was the kingdom of Magadha, which during most of the Buddha's life was ruled by King Bimbasara, a strong and effective ruler who took a great interest in religion. The capital of Magadha was Rajagaha (The King's Abode) which nestled amongst rugged hills and was protected by massive stone walls, the remains of which can still be seen today. A short time after the Buddha's final Nirvana, Magadha shifted its capital from Rajagaha to Pataligama, later to be called Pataliputta and today called Patna, and within a hundred and fifty years had conquered nearly all of India. Directly north of Magadha and separated from it by the Ganges River was the Vajjian Confederacy. The Vajjian Confederacy was made up of several tribes, two of which were called the Licchavies and the Videhas, who had united to protect themselves from their powerful neighbour in the south. The Licchavies were the most

important tribe in the Confederacy and their chief city Vesali was the de facto capital of the Confederacy.

Along the western border of the Vajjian Confederacy was Malla, a small tribal republic divided into two parts, one with its capital at Kusinara and the other with its capital at Pava.

North of Malla were the two small semi-independent republics of the Sakyans and the Koliyans with their capitals at Kapilavatthu and Devadaha respectively. These and the other tribal states were not ruled by kings but by councils made up of the leading citizens, not unlike those that ruled the ancient Greek city-states. The councils would meet regularly and everyone was free to speak their mind.

North-west of Magadha was Kosala, the second largest and most powerful country of the time. During most of the Buddha's life Kosala was ruled by King Pasenadi from his capital at Savatthi. Kosala exercised a great deal of influence over the Sakyans. South-east of Kosala was Vamsa with its capital at Kosambi on the Yamuna River. During much of the Buddha's time Vamsa was ruled by King Udena.

4. The 5th century B.C.E. was a period of transition. Old tribal republics were breaking up under the impact of predatory and autocratic kingdoms like Kosala and Magad-

ha. Cities were becoming larger and more sophisticated, and people were leaving their villages and farms and flocking to Kosambi, Savatthi, Rajagaha and other urban centres.

5. Indian society was divided very sharply by the caste system (*catuvana*). The caste that people were born into determined what work they did, their status in society, who they married, where they lived and who they ate with, in fact almost every aspect of their lives. The highest caste were the Brahmins, who were the hereditary priests of Brahminism, the educators and the scholars. Below them were the Khattiyas, the warrior caste, who were rulers, administrators and soldiers. The next caste were the Vessa, the merchants, traders and artisans. At the bottom of the caste system were the Sudas, who worked as farmers, labourers and menial workers. Outside the caste system were the Candalas, the outcastes, who were considered beyond the pale of civilised society and whose touch was considered to be polluting. They lived on the outskirts of towns and villages, and were compelled to do degrading jobs like collecting rubbish, removing dead bodies, tanning and sweeping the streets. The caste system gave society a great deal of stability but it made social change and mobility almost impossible and it also engendered a great deal of cruelty towards lower castes and outcastes.

Originally the caste system was only a social institution but later it was integrated into Brahminism and given

religious sanction, and most Brahminical and Hindu literature accepts the caste system as having been ordained by God.

6. Writing was known at the Buddha's time but it was not widely used. The reason for this was that India had long before perfected ways of committing literature to memory and passing it on with such accuracy that writing was simply not necessary. The Vedas, the sacred hymns of Brahminism, had been composed nearly a millennium before the Buddha, and indeed were not written down for many centuries after his final Nirvana, and yet they were faithfully preserved. Songs, legends, histories, sacred texts and large amounts of other literature that formed a part of the culture of the day were all preserved orally.

7. The prevailing religion in India during the Buddha's time was Brahminism, not Hinduism as is commonly supposed – Hinduism being an amalgamation of Brahminism, Buddhism and various folk cults which developed only many centuries after the Buddha.

Brahminism believed in a supreme creator god named Brahma and many lesser gods like Aggi, the god of fire, Indra, the king of gods, Yama, the king of the underworld, Suriya, the god of the sun, and so on. These gods were propitiated with sacrifices (*yāga*) which were thrown into the ritual fire and were then believed to be

taken to heaven in the smoke. Ordinary folk might make small sacrifices of grain or ghee, but the wealthy or royalty would sometimes sacrifice large numbers of animals, usually cows but occasionally even human beings. Sacrifices were very complex affairs and it was believed that they would bring down the blessings from the gods only if they were performed absolutely correctly. Only the Brahmins, the hereditary priests knew how to perform the sacrificial rituals correctly, a knowledge that they jealously guarded, and they expected to be well paid for their services. As a result of this, Brahmins had a well-earned reputation for greed and avarice. Another important practice in Brahminism was ritual bathing. It was believed that if a person did evil it could be cleansed or washed away by bathing in certain sacred rivers, the most popular of which was the Ganges.

8. By the Buddha's time, there was widespread dissatisfaction with Brahminism and many people, including many Brahmin intellectuals, were becoming interested in new religious ideas. Parallel to Brahminism and much older was the tradition of unorthodox ascetic teachers (*samana*) who were beginning to attract increasing interest. The most famous of these ascetics was Nataputta, known to his disciples by the title Mahavira Jain (the Victorious Great Hero). His followers were known as the Bond-Free Ones (*Nigantha*) and the religion he founded came to be known as Jainism. Nataputta was an older contemporary of the Buddha and already had many dis-

ciples by the time Buddhism began. Another important group of ascetics were the Ajivikas, founded by Makkhali Gossala. Ajivika ascetics went naked and taught that being good by refraining from evil was useless because everyone would eventually find salvation through the process of transmigration just as a ball of twine rolling along the ground will eventually unwind. The Ajivikas had many influential followers and supporters but the Buddha criticised them as the worst of all ascetics. Some of the other well known teachers of the time were Ajita of the hair blanket, Purana Kassapa, Pakudha Kaccayana and Sanjaya Belatthiputta, all of whose religions lasted only a few centuries and then petered out.

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The Sakyans

9. The Ganges River flows through a broad flat plain bordered on its northern side by the Mahabharat Hills, beyond which lie the Himalayas. Just where the plain meets the hills was the homeland of the Sakyans, the tribe into which the Buddha was born. The Sakyans belonged to the warrior caste (*khattiya*) and had a reputation for hot-headedness and pride. Compared with the other states, the Sakyans were rather unsophisticated, on the outer edge, as it were, of the civilisation that was rapidly developing in northern India at that time. The Sakyans had no cities as such but rather large towns and villages, the main ones being Kapilavatthu, the capital, Catuma, Komadussa and Silavati.

10. Like all peoples of the time, the Sakyans had legends about their origins, a mixture of fact and fiction, meant to emphasise their prowess and nobility. They traced their origins back to the mythical King Okkaka. According to the legend, Okkaka had five queens and numerous children but only the offspring of the chief queen, Bhatta, were in line for the throne. These princes were Okkāmukha, Karakanda, Hatthinika and Sinipura. When the chief queen died, Okkaka married a much younger woman and made her chief queen, passing over his other wives and creating much jealousy.[1] When the

new chief queen delivered a son, Okkaka was so pleased he offered to give her anything she wished. Immediately she replied, “I want my son to inherit the throne.” The king couldn’t do this because his four other sons were legally entitled to the throne, but the queen insisted that he keep his promise. Not being able to back down, he regretfully made his new son Jantu crown prince and expelled his other four sons. Their sisters were disgusted with this decision and as a protest they joined their brothers in exile. The princes and princesses wandered through the jungle looking for a suitable place to stay. Eventually, they came to the hermitage of the sage Kapila who welcomed them and invited them to live nearby, which they did, calling their small settlement Kapilavatthu in honour of the sage. There were isolated villages in the area but the young princes were too proud to marry outside their own tribe and so they made the oldest sister Piya, mother, and married the other sisters, something for which the Sakyans were, in later centuries, often teased. Later Piya married Rama, the king of Benares, and their offspring were the ancestors of the Koliyans, the Sakyans’ relations to the east. It was the learning of this story and others related to the history of the tribe that probably formed a part of the young Prince Siddhartha’s education.

11. The Sakyans had a council (*sabha*) that was made up of warriors of the tribe respected for their military prowess or wisdom. The council met regularly in

Kapilavatthu's assembly hall (*sala*) to discuss the running of the state.[2] The council would have also settled disputes and acted as a law court. A man who had proven himself in battle, who was rich in land and cattle, and who was known for his wisdom, tact and conciliatory skills would be elected as the president of the council and act as ruler of the Sakyans.

12. Suddhodana, whose name means 'pure rice', fulfilled all these requirements and had ruled the Sakyans for many years, as had probably many members of his family before him. He was the son of Sihanu and his wife Kaccana, and was one of five brothers, the others being Dhotodana, Sakkodana, Sukkodana and Amitodana. The Sakyans practised endogamy, marriage between cousins, and polygamy, so Suddhodana married two sisters, Maha Maya and Maha Pajapati Gotami, both of whom were his close cousins. This type of arrangement was encouraged because the Sakyans, being very proud, felt it was beneath their dignity to marry non-Sakyans and also because it kept property within the family.

13. The Buddha was not attached to his tribe but he did have an affectionate regard for them. Once, the young Brahmin Ambattha abused the Sakyans in the presence of the Buddha. When the Buddha asked him why he was so angry with the Sakyans, he said: "Once, I went to Kapilavatthu on some business for my teacher, the Brahmin Pakkharasati, and I came to the Sakyans' assembly

hall. At that time, a crowd of Sakyans was sitting on high seats in their assembly hall, poking each other with their fingers, laughing and playing about together, and I am certain that they were making fun of me. No one even offered me a seat. It is not proper that they do not respect Brahmins." The Buddha defended the Sakyans saying: "But, Ambattha, even the quail, that little bird, can say what she likes in her own nest."

Kapilavatthu is the Sakyans' home. They do not deserve censure for such a minor slight."[3] Many members of the Buddha's family and other Sakyans became prominent in the Sangha, and it was likely that in some ways the Buddha favoured them, although not when it came to spiritual matters. He made his foster mother, Maha Pajapati Gotami, head of the Sangha of nuns. Of the nine different attendants that the Buddha had during his life, one, Ananda, was a cousin and two others, Nagasamala and Meghiya, were Sakyans.

14. After nearly seven years of having heard nothing of his son, Suddhodana came to know that he was staying at Rajagaha, and that he was claiming to be enlightened. Overjoyed to know that his son was still alive, Suddhodana sent a messenger to ask him to return home. The messenger met the Buddha at the Bamboo Grove in Rajagaha and was so enthralled on hearing the Dhamma that there and then he decided to become a monk, completely forgetting to pass Suddhodana's message on to the

Buddha. More messengers were sent and the same thing happened. Finally, in exasperation, Suddhodana commissioned Kāludāyi to take the message, but told him that he had permission to become a monk only on condition that he passed the message to the Buddha. And so the Buddha came to know of his father's desire to see him. Shortly after, he set out for Kapilavatthu, accompanied by a large number of monks. When the party arrived, they stayed outside the town in a park and in the morning entered the town to beg for alms. Only then did Suddhodana learn that the Buddha had arrived and was shocked that his son would sleep under a tree rather than in the palace, and beg in the streets rather than feast at the banquet table. "You are degrading your family's dignity," Suddhodana said, hardly able to contain his anger. The Buddha replied: "Suddhodana, on becoming enlightened one becomes a member of the family of the Noble Ones and their dignity does not depend upon outward trappings but on wisdom and compassion." The Buddha did much teaching in Kapilavatthu and other towns, and many Sakyans became monks while others became enthusiastic followers of the Dhamma while remaining in the lay life. After initial resistance, Suddhodana listened to what his son had to say and became a Once-Returner.

15. The Sakyans' clannishness and pride eventually led to their downfall. Although the Sakyans were free to run their own affairs, they were controlled to some degree by their powerful neighbour to the west, Kosala. By the Bud-

dha's time, Kosala had so much say in Sakyans' affairs that once he actually described his homeland as being a part of Kosala. "Now the Sakyans are vassals of the king of Kosala. They offer him service and salute him, stand for him, do him honour and give him deference."[4] The Buddha's love of personal freedom and independence was probably influenced by his Sakyan upbringing and there is no doubt that he sympathised with the small tribal republics in their struggles to keep their independence from the authoritarian monarchies that were emerging at the time. When he heard that King Ajatasattu was preparing to invade the Vajjian republic, he asked Ananda: "Have you heard that the Vajjians hold regular and frequent assemblies, that they meet in harmony, conduct business in harmony, and adjure in harmony, that they abide by the decisions they have made in accordance with tradition, that they honour, respect, revere and salute their elders and listen to their advice, that they do not abduct others' wives or daughters and compel them to live with them, that they honour, respect, revere, and salute the Vajjian shrines at home and abroad, and do not withdraw the support given to them and that proper provisions and protection are given to holy men so that they can dwell there in comfort and more will come in the future?" Ananda replied that the Vajjians did do all these things and the Buddha said: "For as long as they do these things, the Vajjians may be expected to prosper and not decline."[5]

16. It seems that King Pasenadi of Kosala wished to extend his influence amongst the Sakyans, which he chose to do by demanding a Sakyan noblewoman as a wife for his son. No Sakyans wanted a daughter of theirs to marry outside the tribe, but at the same time they could not ignore the wishes of their powerful neighbour. Mahanama, one of the Buddha's cousins, came up with a solution. He had fathered a daughter named Vasabhakhattiya by one of his female slaves and he suggested that this girl be passed off as a Sakyan noblewoman and given to King Pasenadi's son in marriage. The trick worked; Vasabhakhattiya was taken to Kosala, married and accepted into the Kosalan royal family. Eventually she gave birth to a son who was named Vidudabha and who became crown prince. When Vidudabha grew up he wished to visit what he believed to be his Sakyan relatives at Kapilavatthu but his mother persuaded him not to go, knowing that the Sakyans would treat him with contempt. Eventually he did go and was bewildered by the cool reception he received. Not wanting to receive more disrespect he soon left, but just after leaving Kapilavatthu, one of his attendants had to return to get a sword which he had forgotten. When he arrived at the assembly hall he saw a slave woman washing with milk the seat on which Vidudabha had sat – an accepted way of purifying something that had become ritually impure. The warrior asked the slave why she was doing this. "Because the son of a slave has sat there," she replied. He asked her what she meant and she told him the whole

story. When Vidudabha heard the truth, that his mother was not a noblewoman but a common slave, his humiliation and fury knew no bounds and he vowed that one day he would punish the Sakyans for their deception. "Let them pour milk over my seat to purify it. When I am king, I will wash the place with the blood of their hearts."

17. Towards the end of the Buddha's life, Vidudabha did become king and on several occasions he marched with his army towards Kapilavatthu, although on each occasion the Buddha was able to persuade him to turn back. Eventually though, Kapilavatthu and several other Sakyan towns were attacked and Vidudabha had the personal satisfaction of having many Sakyans massacred. After the campaign, he marched back to Kosala loaded with loot. On their way back, the army camped for one evening beside the bank of a river and during the night, a heavy rainstorm further upstream sent a huge torrent down the river, drowning most of Vidudabha's army. The Sakyans who survived the terrible massacre rebuilt a few small towns and tried to continue their lives, but with their numbers decimated and their independence lost, they declined and are remembered today only because of one of their number, the Buddha.

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What Was The Buddha Like?

18. So extraordinary was the Buddha, so unerringly kind and wise and so positively was an encounter with him able to change people's lives, that even while he was alive legends were told about him. In the centuries after his final Nirvana it sometimes got to the stage that the legends and myths obscured the very real human being behind them and the Buddha came to be looked upon as a god. Actually the Buddha was a human being, not a 'mere human being' as is sometimes said, but a special class of human being called a complete person (*mahapurisa*). Such complete persons are born no different from others and indeed physically they always remain quite ordinary. But through their own efforts they bring to completion every human potential and their mental purity and understanding develop to the stage where they far exceed those of ordinary human beings. A Buddha, a complete person, is even higher than a god because he or she is even free from the jealousy, anger and favouritism that we are told a god is still capable of feeling.

19. So what was the Buddha like? What would it have been like to meet him? The Buddha was about six feet tall with coal black hair and a golden brown complexion. When he was still a layman he wore his hair and beard long but, on renouncing the world, shaved them both like

every other monk.[1] All sources agree that the Buddha was strikingly handsome. The Brahmin Sonadanda described him as "handsome, good-looking, pleasing to the eye, with a most beautiful complexion. He has a god-like form and countenance, he is by no means unattractive."[2] Vacchagotta said this of him:

> "It is wonderful, truly marvellous, how serene is the good Gotama's appearance, how clear and radiant his complexion. just as the golden jujube in autumn is clear and radiant, just as a palm-tree fruit just loosened from the stalk is clear and radiant, just as an adornment of red gold wrought in a crucible by a skilled goldsmith, deftly beaten and laid on a yellow cloth shines, blazes and glitters, even so, the good Gotama's senses are calmed, his complexion is clear and radiant."[3]

But of course as he got older his body succumbed to impermanence as do all compounded things. Ananda described him in his old age like this:

> "It is strange, Lord, it is a wonder how the Exalted One's skin is no longer clear and radiant, how all his limbs are slack and wrinkled, how stooped his body is and how a change is to be seen in eye, ear, nose, tongue and body."[4]

In the last year before his final Nirvana the Buddha said

this of himself:

> "I am now old, worn out, venerable, one who has walked life's path, I have reached the end of my life, being now eighty. Just as an old cart can only be kept going by being held together with straps, so too the Tathagata's body can only be kept going by being held together with bandages."[5]

However, in his prime people were attracted by the Buddha's physical good looks as much as they were by his pleasant personality and his Dhamma. Just to be in his presence could have a noticeable effect upon people. Once Sariputta met Nakulapita and noticing his peaceful demeanour said to him: "Householder, your senses are calmed, your complexion is clear and radiant, I suppose today you have had a talk face to face with the Exalted One?" Nakulapita replied: "How could it be otherwise, master? I have just now been sprinkled with the nectar [...]"[6]

20. The Buddha was a masterful public speaker. With a pleasant voice, good looks and poise combined with the appeal of what he said, he was able to enthral his audience. Uttara described what he saw at a gathering where the Buddha was speaking like this:

> "When he is teaching Dhamma to an assembly in a park he does not exalt them or disparage them

> but rather he delights, uplifts, inspires and gladdens them with talk on Dhamma. The sound that comes from the good Gotama's mouth has eight characteristics: It is distinct and intelligible, sweet and audible, fluent and clear, deep and resonant. Therefore, when the good Gotama instructs an assembly, his voice does not go beyond that assembly. After being delighted, uplifted, inspired and gladdened, that assembly, rising from their seats, depart reluctantly, keeping their eyes upon him."[7]

King Pasenadi once expressed his amazement at how silent and attentive people were when listening to the Buddha's talk.

> "I am a noble anointed king, able to execute those deserving execution, fine those deserving a fine or exile those deserving exile. But when I am deciding a case sometimes people interrupt even me. Sometimes I don't even get a chance to say: 'While I am speaking, sir, don't interrupt me.' But when the Lord is teaching the Dhamma to various assemblies, at that time not even the sound of coughing is to be heard from the Lord's disciples. Once, when the Lord was teaching the Dhamma a monk did cough; one of his fellows in the holy life tapped him on the knee and said: 'Quiet, make no noise, the Lord, our teacher, is teaching

> Dhamma.' When I saw this I thought: 'It is wonderful, truly marvellous, how well-trained, without stick or sword this assembly is.'"[8]

21. Although the Buddha never gave cause for people to dislike him, there were people who did, sometimes out of jealousy, sometimes because they disagreed with his Dhamma and sometimes because he held up their beliefs to the cold light of reason. Once, when he was staying at Kapilavatthu, Dandapani the Sakyan asked him what he taught and when the Buddha told him, Dandapani was not impressed, "shaking his head, wagging his tongue he departed leaning on his stick, his brow furrowed into three wrinkles".[9] The Buddha did not chase after him trying to convince him of the truth of his message. The Buddha responded to all criticism by calmly and clearly explaining why he did what he did and where necessary correcting misunderstanding that gave rise to the criticism. He was always unflustered, polite and smiling in the face of criticism and he urged his disciples to be the same.

> "If anyone should criticise me, the Dhamma or the Sangha, you should not on that account be angry, resentful or upset. For if you were, that would hinder you, and you would be unable to know whether they said right or wrong. Would you?"
> "No, Lord."

> "So, if others criticise me, the Dhamma or the Sangha, then simply explain what is incorrect, saying: 'That is incorrect, that is not right, that is not our way, we do not do that.'"[10]

Sometimes the Buddha was not criticised but rather abused 'with rude, harsh words'. At such times, he usually maintained a dignified silence.

22. The Buddha is often seen as a gentle and loving person and indeed he was, but that didn't mean that he would not himself be critical when he thought it was necessary. He was very critical of some of the other ascetic groups of the time, believing that their false doctrines misled people. About the Jains he said: "The Jains are unbelievers, immoral, shameless and reckless. They are not companions of good men and they exalt themselves and disparage others. The Jains cling to material things and refuse to let go of them. They are rogues, of evil desires and perverse views."[11] When, through misunderstanding, Buddhist monks taught distorted versions of the Dhamma, the Buddha would reprimand them, saying: "You foolish man, how could you think that I would teach Dhamma like that!"[12] But his reprimands and rebukes were never to hurt but to spur people to make more efforts or to re-examine their actions or beliefs.

23. The Buddha's daily routine was a very full one. He would sleep at night for only one hour, wake up and

spend the early morning in meditation, often doing loving-kindness meditation. At dawn he would often walk up and down for exercise and later talk to people who came to visit him. Just before noon, he would take his robe and bowl and go into the nearest city, town or village to beg for alms. He would stand silently at each door and gratefully receive in his bowl whatever food people cared to offer. When he got enough, he would return to the place he was staying at or perhaps go to a nearby woodland area to eat. He used to eat only once a day. After he had become famous, he would often be invited to people's homes for a meal and, being an honoured guest, he would be given sumptuous food, something other ascetics criticised him for. On such occasions he would eat, wash his own hands and bowl after the meal and then give a short Dhamma talk. Straight after his meal he would usually lie down to rest or sometimes to have a short sleep. As at night, it was the Buddha's habit to lie in the lion posture (*sihasana*) on his right side, with one hand under his head and the feet placed on each other. In the afternoon he would talk to people who had come to see him, give instruction to monks or, where appropriate, go to visit people in order to talk to them about the Dhamma. Late at night when everyone was asleep, the Buddha would sit in silence and sometimes devas would appear and ask him questions. Like other monks, the Buddha would usually wander from place to place for nine months of the year, which gave him many opportunities to meet people, and then settle down for the three

months of the rainy season (*vassa*). During the rains he would usually stay in one of the huts (*kuti*) that had been built for him at various locations like the Vultures Peak, the Jetavana or the Bamboo Grove. Ananda would tell visitors approaching the Buddha's abode to cough or knock and that the Buddha would open the door. Sometimes the Buddha would instruct Ananda not to let people disturb him. We read of one man who, on being told that the Buddha did not wish to see anyone, sat down in front of the Buddha's residence saying: "I am not going until I see him." When he was wandering the Buddha would sleep anywhere – under a tree, in a roadside rest house, in a potter's shed. Once Hatthaka saw the Buddha sleeping out in the open and asked him: "Are you happy?" The Buddha answered that he was. Then Hatthaka said: "But sir, the winter nights are cold, the dark half of the moon is the time of frost. The ground has been trampled hard by the hooves of the cattle, the carpet of fallen leaves is thin, there are few leaves on the trees, your yellow robes are thin and the wind is cold." The Buddha reaffirmed that despite his simple and austere lifestyle he was still happy.[13]

24. Because he had such a busy teaching schedule and because he was so often approached for advice on different matters, sometimes he felt the need to be completely alone. On several occasions, he told Ananda he was going into solitude and that only those who were bringing him his food were to come and see him.[14] The Buddha's crit-

ics claimed that he only went into solitude because he found it difficult to answer people's questions and because he wanted to avoid public debates. The ascetic Nigrodha said of him: "The ascetic Gotama's wisdom is destroyed by the solitary life, he is not used to assemblies, he is not good at debates, he has got out of touch."[15] But more usually, the Buddha made himself available for anyone who needed him – for comfort, for inspiration, for guidance in walking the path. Indeed, the most attractive and noticeable thing about the Buddha's personality was the love and compassion that he showered towards everybody, it seemed that these qualities were the motive of everything he did. The Buddha himself said: "When the Tathagata or the Tathagata's disciples live in the world, it is done for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world."[16]

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The Teacher Of Gods And Men

25. A message, no matter how logical or true, is useless if it cannot be communicated to others. In the Dhamma we have a perfect teaching, and in the Buddha we have a perfect teacher, and the combination of these two meant that within a short time of being first proclaimed, the Dhamma became remarkably widespread. The Buddha was the first religious teacher who meant his message to be proclaimed to all humankind and who made a concrete effort to do this. The Buddha was the first religious universalist. He told his first disciples to spread the Dhamma far and wide.

> Go forth for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, the good and the happiness of gods and men. Let no two of you go in the same direction. Teach the Dhamma which is beautiful in the beginning, beautiful in the middle and beautiful at the end. Proclaim both the letter and the spirit of the holy life completely fulfilled and perfectly pure.[1]

He also hoped that after his final Nirvana the teachings would continue to spread and he instructed his disciples, both ordained and lay, accordingly.

> I shall not die until the monks, the nuns, the laymen and the laywomen have become deeply learned, wise and well-trained, remembering the teachings, proficient in the lesser and greater doctrines and virtuous; until, having learned the teachings themselves, they are able to tell it to others, teach it, make it known, establish it, open it up, explain it and make it clear; until they are able to refute false doctrines taught by others and are able to spread the convincing and liberating truth abroad. I shall not die until the holy life has become successful, prosperous, undespised and popular; until it has become well proclaimed among both gods and men.[2]

26. The Buddha's motive in proclaiming the Dhamma was compassion. He said: "Whatever has had to be done by a teacher out of compassion, for the welfare of his disciples, I have done for you."[3]

He saw humans as being limited by their greed, tormented by their hatred and misled by their delusion and he knew that if they could hear the Dhamma and practise it they could become happy, virtuous and free. This compassion turned the Buddha into a tireless and skilful teacher and studying his techniques of teaching can not only help us in our efforts to proclaim the Dhamma to others but also deepen our appreciation for this most compassionate and wise of men.

27. The Buddha would approach people according to their needs and dispositions. Generally, good people would come to see him while he would go out to meet bad people or those in distress. In both cases, he would first give what was called a talk on preliminaries (*anupubbikatha*), that is, "about generosity, virtue, heaven, about the dangers of desires and the advantages of giving them up."[4] This allowed the Buddha to know the listeners' level of intelligence and receptivity. If the response was good, he would then, "teach that Dhamma which is unique to the enlightened ones – suffering, its cause, its overcoming and the way leading to its overcoming."

28. Often the Buddha would talk to groups or individuals giving what we would call a sermon or engaging in dialogue, asking and answering questions. The people he talked with always found him "welcoming, speaking kindly, courteous, genial, clear and ready to speak."[5] When he met people strongly attached to their views and whom he knew he could not change, he would suggest discussing points of agreement so as to avoid fruitless arguments. At such times he would say: "About these things there is no agreement, therefore, let us put them aside. About the things on which we agree let us take up and talk about."[6] Sometimes rather than talk about his own Dhamma he would invite his opponents to explain their teachings first. At a time when there was great competition and jealousy among different religions, the Buddha's fairness often caused surprise. Once a group of ascetics met the

Buddha and their leader asked him to explain his Dhamma. The Buddha said: "Better still, tell me about your teachings." The ascetics were astonished and said to each other: "It is wonderful, truly marvellous, how great is the ascetic Gotama in that he will hold back his own views and invite others to explain theirs."[7] When people asked a particularly appropriate or relevant question he would praise them, thereby encouraging discussion, questioning and inquiry. When Bhadda asked such a question, the Buddha replied, "Well said! Well said, friend Bhadda! Your understanding is welcome. Your wisdom is welcome."[8]

29. Debates were a very common feature of religious life in ancient India and large crowds would gather to hear speakers defend their own doctrines against the attacks of their opponents or critics. Sometimes passions became quite heated during these debates with one party trying to shout down or ridicule the other. Because a speaker's pride and reputation was at stake, those who participated in these debates were sometimes prepared to engage in trickery in order to win or at least give the impression of winning. A monk called Hatthaka used to enjoy debating but eventually he suffered several defeats. After that he would arrange to meet his opponents at a particular time, show up several hours earlier and then boast to his admirers that his opponents were too frightened to confront him.[9] It was probably for these reasons that during the early part of his career the Buddha avoided such debates.[10]

But gradually, as his Dhamma became more popular and began to be challenged or misrepresented by ascetics of other sects, he began to frequent debates. In fact, he was soon recognised as the most persuasive debater of his time. Certain rules governed the conduct of debates and the Buddha always abided by these rules and expected others to follow them also. When a young man named Canki kept interjecting while the Buddha was debating with some learned Brahmins, he turned to him and said firmly: "Quiet, Canki! Do not interrupt while we are speaking."[11] If on being asked a question for the third time a person could still not answer, the Buddha would insist that they admit defeat as was the rule.[12] Once he asked an ascetic if he readily believed in the view he held, the ascetic said, "I believe it and so do all these people," as he pointed at the large audience. The Buddha said, "What they believe is not the point. Is that *your* view?"[13] But of course the Buddha's purpose was not to defeat his opponents but to lead them to a clearer understanding. To this end he would often use what is called the Socratic method, so called because in the West it was first used by the Greek philosopher Socrates, asking clearer questions as a means of leading people to an insight or to prove a point. For example, once during a discussion, a Brahmin named Sonadanda proclaimed: "A true Brahmin has pure ancestry, he is well-versed in the sacred scriptures, he is fair in colour, he is virtuous, he is wise and he is an expert in the rituals." The Buddha asked: "Could a person lack one of these qualities and still be considered

a Brahmin?" Sonadanda thought for a moment and then admitted that one could have a dark complexion and still be a Brahmin. Continuing to ask the same question, Sonadanda was led to the same view as the Buddha's, that it is not ancestry, knowledge, colour or social status that makes one superior but virtue and wisdom.[14]

30. Humour plays an important part in mental health as it does in effective communication. Consequently, it is not surprising to find the Buddha sometimes including humour in his teaching. His discourses contain clever puns, amusing stories and a good deal of irony. After King Ajatasattu had killed his father and started to become suspicious that his own son might be plotting to kill him, he began to realise that the fruits of worldly ambition could be bitter and went to seek guidance from the Buddha. He asked: "Sir, can you show me any benefits of the monk's life that can be seen here and now?" The Buddha replied by asking him a question: "If you had a slave who ran away and became a monk and later, on finding out where he was, would you have him arrested and brought back?" "Certainly not," replied the king, "on the contrary, I would stand up for him, respect him and offer to provide him with his needs." "Well there," said the Buddha, "that is one of the benefits of being a monk that can be seen here and now."[15] The humorous vein of this answer was clearly meant to put Ajatasattu at his ease, lift him out of his gloom and make him receptive to the fuller and more serious answer that the Buddha then proceeded to

give. The Buddha often poked good-natured fun at the pretensions of the Brahmins and the absurdity of some of their beliefs. When they claimed to be superior to others because they were born from God's mouth, the Buddha would comment: "But you were born from the womb of your mother just like everyone else."[16] He told stories in which he portrayed the all-knowing God of the Brahmins as being embarrassed and not a little annoyed at being asked a question he could not answer.[17] When Brahmins said that they could wash away their sins by bathing in sacred rivers, he joked that the water might wash away their good deeds also.

31. Another characteristic of the Buddha's method of teaching was his use of similes and metaphors. Drawing upon his wide interest in and knowledge of the world in which he lived, he used a rich variety of similes and metaphors to clarify his teachings and make them more memorable. For example, he compared a person who fails to practise the teachings he proclaimed to a beautiful flower without fragrance.[18] We should replace negative thoughts, the Buddha said, with positive ones, just as a carpenter knocks a peg out of a hole with a second peg.[19] He was also skilled at using whatever was at hand to make a point or dramatise or make clear his meaning. Prince Abhaya once asked the Buddha if he had ever said anything that made people feel unhappy. At the time the prince was holding his baby son on his knee. The Buddha looked at the child and said: "If your son put a stone in

his mouth, what would you do?” Prince Abhaya replied: “I would get it out straight away even if I had to hurt the child. And why? Because it could be a danger to the child and I have compassion for him.” Then the Buddha explained that sometimes he would say things that people needed to be told but did not like to hear, but that his motive was always compassion for that person.[20]

32. Another characteristic of the Buddha’s skilful way of teaching was his ability to give a new or practical meaning to old ideas or practices and to reinterpret things in order to make them relevant. When someone asked him what was the most powerful blessing, rather than mention various charms or mantras, as they expected, the Buddha said that to act with honesty, kindness and integrity would bless one. When he was accused of teaching annihilation he agreed that he did, but then qualified his agreement by explaining that he taught the annihilation of greed, hatred and delusion.[21] The Buddha used terms like Brahmin and outcaste (*vasala*) not in the way they were used by the supporters of the caste system but to indicate a person’s virtue or lack of it.[22]

33. In some religions, it is only necessary to believe in order to be saved, while in Buddhism, Nirvana can only be attained through understanding. As such, those who came to hear the Buddha teach and who became his disciples tended to be the better educated lay men and women, and the intellectuals of the time. The Dhamma,

the Buddha said, had “to be understood by the wise each for himself (*paccattam veditabho vinnuhi*).”[23] But this did not mean that the Buddha had nothing to say to the unsophisticated. On the contrary, with his skill and creativity, he was able to make his message intelligible to people of all levels of understanding, even to children, and as a result people of all types became his disciples. So successful was he in fact, that some of the other teachers of his time accused him of using magic to lure their disciples away.[24]

34. Because the Buddha’s motive in teaching the Dhamma was compassion and because his compassion was infinite, he never tired in his efforts to proclaim it or explain it to others. Only a few months before his final Nirvana he said:

> “There are some who say that as long as a man is young, he possesses lucidity of wisdom, but as he ages that wisdom begins to fade. But this is not so. I am now worn, old, aged, I have lived my life and am now towards the end of my life, being about eighty. Now if I had four disciples who were to live for a hundred years and if, during that time, they were to ask me questions about the four foundations of mindfulness, except when they were eating, drinking, answering the call of nature or sleeping, I would still not finish explaining Dhamma. Even if you have to carry me about

> on a stretcher there will be no change in the lucidity of wisdom. If anyone were to speak rightly of me they could say: 'A being not liable to delusion has arisen in the world, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good and the happiness of gods and men.'"[25]

35. And he was true to his words in this respect. As he lay dying, a man approached him to ask a question. Ananda and the other disciples held him back saying that the Buddha was tired and ill, but when the Buddha saw this, he beckoned the man forward and answered his questions.[26] The Buddha's great gift to humankind was the truth and his compassion motivated him to give it to all who were willing to receive it.

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The Order Of Monks And Nuns

36. For centuries, religion in India had been divided between two contrasting movements, the orthodox Brahmin tradition and the unorthodox (*samana*) tradition. The Brahmins taught that salvation could be achieved by being a good son and father and by faithfully performing certain rituals. The Brahmins themselves were married, usually to several wives, well educated in sacred and secular knowledge, and supported themselves and their families with the fees they received by performing the rituals that were believed to be essential for prosperity in this life and heaven in the next. The *samana* tradition on the other hand taught that salvation could only be achieved by understanding and transforming the mind. To facilitate this, renouncing family and social responsibility was considered helpful as it freed one from unnecessary distractions. Experimentation with various yogic and meditative exercises and also the practice of self-mortification were also common in this movement. This tradition was epitomised by the ascetic (*samana, paribbajaka, muni, tapasa*, etc.) who lived alone, or in small bands in the jungle, or in mountain caves, shunning society and its conventions. While some ascetics went naked, most wore simple clothing, usually dyed yellow, a colour that identified them as world-renouncers. In India, yellow was the colour of death or renunciation because before a leaf

drops from a tree it turns yellow. When Prince Siddhattha renounced the world, it seems that he automatically assumed that the path of the ascetic rather than the path of the Brahmin would lead him to truth.

37. After he became the Buddha, he saw the need for a fraternity of ascetics devoted to helping others attain enlightenment and to transmit the Dhamma throughout space and time. Consequently, like other teachers, he founded a community of monks (*bhikkhu sangha*), an autonomous legal body with its own rules and regulations. The Buddha changed the structure and rules of the Sangha as new situations arose and in the Vinaya Pitaka we get a picture of this gradual evolution. Over the centuries, while great empires have come and gone, the Sangha has survived and flourished, acting as a quiet witness to how the Dhamma should be lived and as a medium for the spread of civilisation throughout Asia.

38. To become a novice (*samanera*) in the Bhikkhu Sangha, all that was needed was to approach a monk of at least ten years standing and ask to be accepted. The realisation that led to the decision to renounce the world often came as a result of hearing the Buddha's teaching and was usually expressed like this: "The household life is confined and dusty, going forth from it is freeing. It is not easy for one who lives in the home to live the holy life perfectly complete, perfectly pure and polished like a conch shell. Suppose that I cut off my hair and beard, put

on the yellow robe and go forth from home into homelessness?”[1] After the candidate had shaved his head and put on his robe, he had to live by the Ten Precepts. The Buddha allowed even small boys to be ordained as novices. After a novice had received sufficient training and was at least 20 years of age, he could take his full ordination (*upasampadā*) and become a monk (*bhikkhu*). To do this, he would have to approach an assembly of ten monks or more of at least ten years standing who were respected for their learning and virtue. The candidate would then be asked eleven questions to determine his suitability, his motives and his readiness. (1) Are you free from disease? (2) Are you a human being? (3) Are you a man? (4) Are you a free man? (5) Are you free from debt? (6) Do you have any obligations to the king? (7) Do you have your parents’ permission? (8) Are you at least twenty years of age? (9) Do you have your bowl and robe? (10) What is your name? (11) What is your teacher’s name? If the candidate answered these questions satisfactorily, he then requested higher ordination three times and if no one raised any objections, he was considered a monk.

39. Buddhist monks called themselves and were known by others as The Sons of the Sakyan (*Sakyaputta*). A monk could use property belonging jointly to the monastic community, but he himself could only own eight requisites (*atthapirika*). They were (1) an outer robe (*cīvara*), (2) an inner robe, (3) a thick robe for the winter, (4) an

alms bowl with which he gathered his food, (5) a razor, (6) a needle and thread, (7) a belt, and (8) a water strainer to purify water and remove tiny creatures from it. A monk was expected to take everything he owned with him whenever he went on a journey “just as a bird takes only its wings with it whenever it goes”.[2]

40. If people wished to give a gift to a monk, he could accept only food or any of those eight requisites, anything else – land, a building, cloth or grain, etc – could only be accepted on behalf of the whole community and thus became the property of all. On becoming a monk, one was obliged to follow the *Patimokkha*, the two hundred and twenty-seven rules, which governed the discipline and functioning of the Sangha. The rules were divided into eight categories according to the punishment required if they were infringed. The most important rules were the four *Parajika* which, if a monk broke, he was automatically expelled from the Sangha and could not be ordained again in the future. They were (1) sexual intercourse, (2) theft, (3) murder, and (4) falsely claiming to have psychic powers or spiritual attainments. The word *parajika* literally means ‘defeat’ and means that the person who has broken any of these rules has been defeated by his desire, hatred or pride. Other important rules were the thirteen *Sanghadisesa*, which if infringed, required confession, and *Nissaggiya Pacittiya*, thirty rules concerning possessions, which if infringed, were punished by confiscation of the possessions. Other rules governed eti-

quette, settlement of disputes and administration. Because these rules, all of which are now recorded in the Vinaya Pitaka, were meant to be ways of maintaining discipline and solving the problems that always arise when people live together, they are not absolutes. The Buddha said that they could be changed or modified according to circumstances. Before he attained final Nirvana, he said to the monks, "If they wish, the Sangha may abolish the minor rules after my passing."[3]

41. Like all ascetics of the time, Buddhist monks spent most of the year wandering from place to place. This mobility gave the monks the opportunity to meet with large numbers of people to whom they could teach the Dhamma and it also guaranteed that they could not accumulate property. However, one of the rules for monks was that they had to settle down and stay at one location for the three months of the rainy session (*vassa*). This period of staying put was necessitated by the fact that any travel was difficult during the rainy season, but the monks used it as an opportunity for intensified meditation. The number of such periods of meditation retreat a monk had had was a mark of his maturity and experience and then, as now, when monks met each other they would ask each other: "How many rains (*vassa*) have you had?"

42. To maintain discipline and strengthen common values in the Sangha, it was necessary for the monks to have a communal life in which everyone participated. Certain

areas called constituencies (*sima*) were demarcated and all monks living within that area would come together twice a month, the meeting being called the *Uposatha*. During the *Uposatha*, the *Patimokkha* would be recited, breaches of discipline were confessed and punishment meted out, matters concerning the community were dealt with and of course the Dhamma was discussed. If decisions had to be made, each monk could voice his opinion and had the right to vote on the decisions. The *Uposatha* had an important role to play in reaffirming the Sangha's identity, strengthening fellowship, and in particular, in preserving and transmitting the Dhamma.

43. At first there were no nuns, but as the Dhamma became more popular and widespread, women gradually became more interested in leading the monastic life. During one of the Buddha's visits to Kapilavatthu, just after his father had died, Maha Pajapati Gotami, his foster mother, approached him and asked if she could be ordained. The Buddha refused and Maha Pajapati Gotami went away in tears. After the Buddha left Kapilavatthu for Vesali, she shaved off her hair, put on a yellow robe and set out for Vesali also. She arrived covered with dust, with her feet cut and swollen, and with tears streaming down her cheeks. She asked Ananda to approach the Buddha and ask him once again if she could be ordained. And again he refused. Ananda felt sorry for Maha Pajapati Gotami and decided to intercede on her behalf. First he asked the Buddha if women had the same spiritual poten-

tial as men. The Buddha replied: “Women, having gone forth from home into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline taught by the Tathagata, are able to realise the fruits of Stream-Winning, of Once-Returning, of Non-Returning and of Arahantship.” Then Ananda asked the Buddha to consider how helpful his foster mother had been to him. “Lord, if women can realise the same states as men, and as Maha Pajapati Gotami was of great service to you – she is your aunt, your foster mother, your nurse, she gave you her milk and suckled you when your mother died – therefore, it would be good if women would be allowed to go forth from home into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline taught by the Tathagata.”

44. The Buddha finally agreed but stipulated that nuns would have to live by some extra rules. The special rules for nuns were (1) in matters of respect and deference, a monk always had precedence over a nun, (2) a nun must spend the rains retreat in a place separated from monks, (3) nuns must ask monks for the date to hold the *Uposatha* and about teaching the Dhamma, (4) when a nun did wrong she must confess it before the community of both nuns and monks, (5) a nun who broke an important rule must undergo punishment before both the nuns and the monks, (6) a nun must be ordained by both an assembly of nuns and of monks, (7) nuns must not abuse or revile a monk, and (8) a nun must not teach a monk. Maha Pajapati Gotami accepted these extra rules, and so the Order of Nuns (*bhikkhuni sangha*) was inaugurated.[4]

45. However, the Buddha seems to have thought that with both males and females together, maintaining celibacy (*brahmacariya*), an important aspect of the monastic life, would be difficult. He later said that now that there were monks and nuns, a celibate order would only last for five hundred years. Interestingly enough, his prediction proved to be fairly accurate. By the 7th century CE, certain groups of monks were beginning to marry, a trend that, along with other circumstances, eventually led to the decline of Buddhism in India. Fortunately, in most Buddhist countries, monks and nuns continue to practise celibacy and uphold the original values of the monastic life.

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The Two Chief Disciples

46. The two people who were to become the Buddha's chief disciples were both born on the same day in adjacent villages just north of Rajagaha. The first was named Moggallana while the second was named Upatissa, although he was always called Sariputta, son of Sari, Sari being his mother's name. The two boys grew up together and became close friends. When they grew into youths, they went into Rajagaha one day to attend a festival, and as they sat watching a theatrical play they were both overcome by a strong sense of the impermanence of life, as a result of which they both decided to renounce the world. One of the most well-known religious teachers of the time was Sanjaya Belatthiputta, and the two young men became disciples under him. Sanjaya was famous for his evasiveness in answering questions and his rivals referred to him as an eel-wriggler (*amaravikkhepikas*).[1]

47. Moggallana and Sariputta stayed with Sanjaya for some years, leading the life of wandering ascetics, but they were not really satisfied with what they were learning from their teacher. After a while they decided to split up and each go their own way in search for truth, promising that the first to find it should tell the other. One day, as Sariputta was walking through Rajagaha, he saw a monk and was deeply impressed by the grace and poise

with which he moved and the calm happy expression on his face. The monk happened to be Assaji, one of the Buddha's disciples. Sariputta asked him:

> "Who is your teacher?" and Assaji replied, "Friend, there is a great ascetic, a son of the Sakyans, who went forth from the Sakyan clan. It is because of this Lord that I have gone forth. This Lord is my teacher, I accept this Lord's Dhamma."
> "What doctrine does your teacher teach? What does he point to?"
> "Friend, I am a beginner, I have only just gone forth, I am new in this Dhamma and discipline. I cannot teach the Dhamma in full, but I will tell you its essence."
> "So be it, your reverence, tell me little or tell me much, but either way give me its essence, I just want the essence. There is no need for great elaboration."
> So Assaji said: "Those things that proceed from a cause, of those things the Tathagata has told the cause. And that which is their stopping, of that the great recluse also has a doctrine."

48. When Sariputta heard this he became a Stream-Winner, and set out straight away to find his friend Moggallana. When the two met, Moggallana could see straight away that something wonderful had happened to his friend. "Friend, your faculties are quite pure and your

complexion is bright and clear. Can it be that you have attained the Immortal?" "Yes, friend, I have attained the Immortal," Sariputta replied. He told his friend how it happened and the two decided to seek out the Buddha so they could both hear more about the Dhamma from his own lips. But Moggallana, whose compassion often led him to think of the welfare of others before his own, suggested that first they go to Sanjaya and his disciples and tell them what they had discovered, certain that they would welcome the news. But when they told Sanjaya that they intended to become disciples of the Buddha, he was far from happy and tried to change their minds. In fact, so worried was he at the prospect of losing two well-known disciples to someone whom he looked upon as a rival, that he even offered to make them his co-teachers if they would stay with him. Sariputta and Moggallana refused this offer and together with nearly all of Sanjaya's two hundred and fifty disciples, they left to find the Buddha. As soon as the Buddha saw the two young ascetics coming at the head of their followers, he knew that they would become his most capable and trusted disciples. Moggallana became enlightened seven days after his ordination, as did Sariputta two weeks later.[2]

49. Sariputta's and Moggallana's abilities and dispositions were such that they developed very different faculties. Of all the Buddha's disciples, Sariputta was best able to understand and explain the Dhamma, and in this way he was only second to the Buddha himself. Once the Bud-

dha said to him: "You are wise, Sariputta, great and wide is your wisdom, joyful and quick is your wisdom, sharp and analytical is your wisdom. Just as the eldest son of a Universal Monarch rules rightly as his father did, even so do you turn the wheel of the Dhamma just as I have."[3] Such regard did the Buddha have for Sariputta that he gave him the title General of the Dhamma (*Dhammasena-pati*). In one of his discourses, Sariputta talked about the qualities needed to teach the Dhamma and we can safely assume that he emphasised these same qualities when he was teaching.

> "When one who teaches wishes to teach another, let him establish well five things and then teach. What five? Let him think: 'I will speak at the right time, not at the wrong time. I will speak about what is, not about what is not. I will speak with gentleness, not with harshness. I will speak about the goal, not about what is not the goal. I will speak with a mind filled with love, not with a mind filled with ill-will.' When one who teaches wishes to teach another, let him establish well these five things."[4]

50. Though Sariputta was an enthusiastic and effective Dhamma teacher, he also knew that while people can be helped through being taught the Dhamma, sometimes they need practical, material help also. And in this way he was always ready to lend a hand. Once, Yasodhara

became very ill with wind and her son, Rahula, tried to get medicine for her. He consulted Sariputta who, because of his experience in nursing the sick, knew exactly what the most suitable medicine would be and then went to get some. Together with Rahula he administered the medicine to Yasodhara who soon recovered.[5] While he was always ready to visit the sick to offer them comfort and help, he also had a particular concern for the poor and lonely whom he often helped and favoured over the wealthy and the influential. On one occasion large numbers of people were coming to the monastery where the Buddha was staying to invite monks to their homes for a meal. People were anxious to get the more well-known monks and these monks were particularly happy to go to the homes of the wealthy, knowing they would get fine food. All the monks except Sariputta had accepted invitations when a very poor woman appeared and asked if a monk would like to go to her home. The monastery attendant informed her that all monks except Sariputta were gone. Thinking that such an eminent monk would not wish to accept a humble meal from her, she was quite disappointed. But when the attendant informed Sanputta about the poor woman, he happily agreed to go to her home, to her delight. When King Pasenadi heard that Sariputta would be eating at the home of a very poor woman, he sent her a large amount of money, more than enough to provide Sariputta with a meal, with plenty left over to live comfortably for the rest of her life.[6]

51. Next to Sariputta the Buddha considered Moggallana to be his wisest and most highly developed disciple. According to tradition, he had a very dark complexion, as dark as a rain cloud. Moggallana's most developed faculties were not wisdom but psychic powers (*iddhi*). When, as a result of meditation, the mind is "concentrated, purified, cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities, malleable, workable and firm," it sometimes becomes capable of extraordinary abilities. Some of the psychic powers that Buddhist monks occasionally developed were the ability to change their appearance, being able to sense what was happening a great distance away, being able to read other people's minds and being able to leave the body.[7]

52. The Buddha knew that the display of psychic powers could have quite an effect upon people, and not always a positive one. Those who displayed such powers could easily be spoiled by the adulation they received, while those who saw such powers displayed often gave unthinking devotion to those who had them. He was also critical of the use of psychic displays to convert people. Once, when the Buddha was staying at Nalanda, one of his disciples said to him: "Lord, Nalanda is rich, prosperous, crowded, full of people who have faith in you. It would be good if you were to get a monk to perform extraordinary feats and miracles. In this way Nalanda would come to have even more faith."[8] The Buddha refused this request because he wanted people to follow

the Dhamma out of understanding, not because they had been impressed by miracles or psychic feats.

53. Once, a wealthy merchant put a sandalwood bowl on the top of a long bamboo pole which he set up in the market at Rajagaha. Then he let it be known that any monk who could rise into the air and remove the bowl could have it. Shortly afterwards, Moggallana and Pindola Bharadvaja went into Rajagaha, and when the merchant saw them he said, "You both have psychic powers. If you fetch the bowl, it is yours." So Pindola rose into the air and brought the bowl down, to the immense admiration of the large crowd who had gathered to watch. Then the merchant called Pindola to his house and filled the sandalwood bowl with expensive food. After that, everywhere Pindola went, crowds of noisy, excited people followed him. When the Buddha heard about this, he called Pindola and scolded him:

> "It is not fitting, it is not becoming, it is not right, it is not worthy of a monk, it is not allowable, it should not be done. How could you, for the sake of a miserable wooden bowl, exhibit one of the conditions of a developed person to these householders. It is just like a loose woman who exhibits her undergarment for the sake of a few miserable coins."[9]

As a result of this incident, the Buddha made a rule mak-

ing it an offence for monks to unnecessarily display their psychic powers.

However, he also realised that psychic powers could sometimes be put to good use. On another occasion, some thieves attacked a house and kidnapped two children. When the monk Pilindavaccha heard of this, he used his psychic powers to bring the children back. When the other monks accused him of breaking the rule, the Buddha declared him innocent of any offence because he had used his powers out of compassion."[10]

54. Moggallana likewise usually used his psychic powers only to help people. Once when he was staying with the Buddha on the upper floor of the residence of Migaramata, a group of monks on the ground floor were chattering away and making a great noise. The Buddha described them as being "frivolous, empty-headed, agitated, with harsh and useless speech, lacking concentration, unsteady, not composed, with flighty minds and with senses uncontrolled" and he urged Moggallana to give them "a good stirring." So using his big toe Moggallana made the whole house, as large as it was, shake and tremble. Thinking that the house was about to collapse and shouting in fear, the monks ran outside. The Buddha then approached them and told them that at his request Moggallana had shaken the house by means of the psychic powers he had developed with diligent meditation and that they likewise should spend time meditating instead

of indulging in idle chatter.[11] But like the Buddha himself, Moggallana more usually helped people by teaching them the Dhamma, and the Tipitaka preserves many of the discourses he delivered to monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen.

55. Both Sariputta and Moggallana died before their teacher, the Buddha. When Sariputta realised that his end was near, he took his leave of the Buddha and set off for the village where he was born. Despite having such a spiritually developed son, Sariputta's mother had no faith in the Dhamma, and Sariputta wished to repay his mother for bringing him up by helping her understand the Buddha's teachings. He sent a monk ahead to inform his mother that he was coming home. She was delighted, thinking that her son had finally disrobed and returned to the lay life. When he arrived and she realised that he was still a monk, she locked herself in her room and sulked. Sariputta's health rapidly began to deteriorate and as he lay in his room numerous devas came to pay their respects to him. When Sariputta's mother saw all these heavenly beings, she began to realise just how virtuous and holy her son was, and went to see him as he lay dying. Sariputta discussed the Dhamma with her and she became a Stream-Winner. He then called all the other monks who had accompanied him and asked them if over the last forty years he had offended them, whether they would forgive him. They all assured him that there was nothing to forgive and shortly after this, Sariputta

attained final Nirvana.

56. Only two weeks later, Moggallana died. He had long claimed that he knew the destinies of those who had passed away and that Jain ascetics were usually reborn in the lower realms. Moggallana was widely respected, his psychic powers were well-known and people believed what he said about the Jains. Alarmed at their waning influence, a group of unscrupulous Jain ascetics decided to murder him. They hired some thugs who surrounded the house where Moggallana was staying, but when he became aware of their presence, he escaped through the key hole. This happened on several occasions until eventually the thugs caught him, beating him severely and leaving him for dead. Barely alive, he staggered to where the Buddha was, to pay his last respects, and then he died. Legend says that Moggallana met his death in this way because, in a former life, he had murdered his parents at the instigation of his wife, who was jealous of the attention he gave them.

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Ananda – The Man Whom Everybody Liked

57. The Buddha was always accompanied by an attendant whose job it was to run messages for him, prepare his seat and to attend to his personal needs. For the first twenty years of his ministry, he had several attendants, Nagasamala, Upavana, Nagita, Cunda, Radha and others, but none of them proved to be suitable. One day, when he decided to replace his present attendant, he called all the monks together and addressed them: "I am now getting old and wish to have someone as a permanent attendant who will obey my wishes in every way. Which of you would like to be my attendant?" All the monks enthusiastically offered their services, except Ananda, who modestly sat at the back in silence. Later, when asked why he had not volunteered he replied that the Buddha knew best who to pick. When the Buddha indicated that he would like Ananda to be his personal attendant, Ananda said he would accept the position, but only on several conditions. The first four conditions were that the Buddha should never give him any of the food that he received, nor any of the robes, that he should not be given any special accommodation, and that he would not have to accompany the Buddha when he accepted invitations to people's homes. Ananda insisted on these four conditions because he did not want people to

think that he was serving the Buddha out of desire for material gain. The last four conditions were related to Ananda's desire to help in the promotion of the Dhamma. These conditions were: that if he was invited to a meal, he could transfer the invitation to the Buddha; that if people came from outlying areas to see the Buddha, he would have the privilege of introducing them; that if he had any doubts about the Dhamma, he should be able to talk to the Buddha about them at any time and that if the Buddha gave a discourse in his absence, he would later repeat it in his presence. The Buddha smilingly accepted these conditions and thus began a relationship between the two men that was to last for the next twenty-five years.

58. Ananda was born in Kapilavatthu and was the Buddha's cousin, being the son of Amitodana, the brother of the Buddha's father, Suddhodana. It was during the Buddha's first trip back to Kapilavatthu after his enlightenment that Ananda, along with his brother Anuruddha and his cousin Devadatta, became a monk. He proved to be a willing and diligent student and within a year he became a Stream-Winner. The monk's life gave Ananda great happiness and his quiet, unassuming nature meant that he was little noticed by the others until he was selected to be the Buddha's personal attendant. While some people develop the qualities that lead to enlightenment through meditation or study, Ananda did it through the love and concern he had for others. Just before the Buddha attained final Nirvana, Ananda began to cry, saying to himself: "Alas, I am

still a learner with much still to do. And the teacher is passing away, he who was so compassionate to me.” The Buddha called Ananda into his presence and reassured him that he had developed his mind to a very high degree through his selflessness and love and that if he made just a bit more effort he too would attain enlightenment.

> “Enough, Ananda, do not weep and cry. Have I not already told that all things that are pleasant and delightful are also changeable, subject to separateness and impermanence? So how could they not pass away? Ananda, for a long time you have been in my presence, showing loving-kindness with body, speech and mind, helpfully, blessedly, whole- heartedly, and unstingily. You have made much merit, Ananda. Make an effort and very soon you will be free from the defilements.”[1]

59. Ananda’s selflessness expressed itself in three ways – through his service to the Buddha, through his unstinting kindness to his fellow disciples, both ordained and lay, and also to future generations through the crucial role he had to play in the preservation and transmission of the Dhamma.

60. As the Buddha’s personal attendant Ananda strived to free the Buddha from as many mundane activities as possible so he could concentrate on teaching the Dhamma and helping people. To that end, he washed and mended the Buddha’s robe, tidied his living quarters, washed his

feet, massaged his back and when he was meditating or talking, stood behind him keeping him cool with a fan. He slept near the Buddha so as to always be at hand and accompanied him when he did his round of the monasteries. He would call monks whom the Buddha wished to see and kept people away when the Buddha wished to rest or to be alone. In his role as servant, secretary, go-between and confidant, Ananda was always patient, tireless and unobtrusive, usually anticipating the Buddha's needs.

61. Although Ananda's main job was to take care of the Buddha's needs, he always had time to be of service to others as well. He would often give talks on Dhamma and indeed such a skilful teacher was he that sometimes the Buddha would ask him to give a talk in his place, or finish a talk that he had begun.[2] We are told that when the Buddha would have his afternoon rests, Ananda would take advantage of the spare time to go and visit those who were sick, to talk to them, cheer them up or try to get medicine for them. Once he heard of a very poor family struggling to bring up two young sons. Knowing that the boys faced a very grim future and feeling that something had to be done to help them, Ananda got permission from the Buddha to ordain them, thus giving them a chance in life.[3]

62. Life in the Sangha was not always easy for nuns. Most monks kept away from them, not wanting to be tempted. Some even discriminated against them. Ananda, on the other hand, was always ready to help them. It was

he who encouraged the Buddha to ordain the first nuns, he was always ready to give Dhamma talks to nuns and lay-women and encourage them in their practice, and they in turn often sought him out because of his sympathy for them.[4]

63. The Buddha once said that of all his disciples, Ananda was pre-eminent of those who had heard much Dhamma, who had a good memory, who had mastered the sequential order of what he had remembered and who was energetic.[5] The Buddha could not write, indeed, although writing was known at the time, it was little used. Both during his life and for several centuries after his final Nirvana, his words were committed to memory and transmitted from one person to another. Ananda's highly developed memory, plus the fact that he was constantly at the Buddha's side, meant that he, more than any other person, was responsible for preserving and transmitting the Buddha's teachings. By this, it is not meant that Ananda remembered the Buddha's words verbatim – this would have been neither possible nor necessary, as understanding the Dhamma is not dependent on the arrangement of words and sentences but on the comprehension of the meaning of the words. Rather, Ananda remembered the gist of what the Buddha had said, to whom he said it, particularly important or prominent phrases, similes or parables that were used and also the sequence in which all the ideas were presented. Ananda would repeat what he had heard and remembered to others and gradually a large body of oral

teachings developed. This meant that people far from the Buddha's presence could hear his teachings without the aid of books or the necessity of having to travel long distances.

64. After the Buddha's final Nirvana five hundred enlightened monks convened a Council at Rajagaha for the purpose of collecting all the Buddha's teachings and committing them to memory so they could be handed down to future generations. Because he knew so much Dhamma it was essential that Ananda be present, but he was not yet enlightened. Now that he no longer had to look after the Buddha's needs, he had more time to meditate and so he began to practise with exceptional diligence, hoping that he could attain enlightenment before the Council started. As the time for the Council's commencement got closer, he practised harder and harder. During the evening before the Council he sat meditating, convinced that he would not be able to attain enlightenment by the next morning. So he gave up and decided to lie down and sleep. As his head touched the pillow he became enlightened.

Ananda was warmly welcomed at the Council the next day and over the following months he recited thousands of discourses that he had heard, commencing each recitation with the words: 'Thus have I heard' (*Evam me sutam*). Because of his enormous contributions to the preservation of the Dhamma, Ananda was sometimes known as: 'The Keeper of the Dhamma Store' (*Dhammabhandagarika*). Because of his qualities of kindness, patience and helpful-

ness, Ananda was one of those rare people who seemed to be able to get along with everybody and whom everybody liked. Just before his final Nirvana, the Buddha praised Ananda in the company of the monks by thanking him for his years of loyal and loving friendship and service. "Monks, all those who were fully enlightened Buddhas in the past had a chief attendant like Ananda, as will all those who will be fully enlightened Buddhas in the future. Ananda is wise. He knows when it is the right time for monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, kings, ministers, the leaders of other sects or their pupils to come and see me. Ananda has four remarkable and wonderful qualities. What four? If a company of monks comes to see Ananda, they are pleased at the sight of him, and when he teaches Dhamma to them they are pleased, and when he finishes they are disappointed. And it is the same for nuns, laymen and laywomen."[6]

65. It is not known when or where Ananda passed away but, according to tradition, he lived to a ripe old age. When Fa Hien, the famous Chinese pilgrim, visited India in the 5th century CE, he reported seeing a stupa containing Ananda's ashes, and that nuns in particular had high regard for his memory.

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The Murderer Who Became A Saint

66. King Pasenadi's chaplain was a learned but superstitious Brahmin named Bhaggava Gagga. It was his job to cast horoscopes, advise about the best time to embark on various projects and ward off evil influences with spells and mantras. He was filled with joy when his wife gave birth to a boy, but when the baby's horoscope was drawn up, his joy turned to dread. The horoscope indicated that the boy would grow up with criminal tendencies. Filled with superstitious fear, the parents decided to name the boy Ahimsaka, 'Harmless' in the hope that this would counter the influence of the stars. "The boy grew up into a fine youth who was good at his studies and obedient to his parents. But to make sure that the boy would never turn bad, they constantly stressed to him the importance of obeying them and doing what he was told.

Eventually, he left home for Taxila to do his higher studies. In those days, young Brahmins would go to Taxila and live in the house of a learned Brahmin to learn traditional lore and in return, work in his home. The relationship would be like that between father and son. Ahimsaka was a particularly obedient student which earned him special attention from his teacher but it also created jeal-

ousy in the other students. They decided to try to turn the teacher against Ahimsaka. According to plan, they went one by one to the teacher and whispered that his favourite student was trying to usurp his position. At first the teacher dismissed this as nonsense, but gradually the seeds of doubt were sown, and they eventually sprouted into suspicion and the teacher became convinced of Ahimsaka's hostility to him. "This young man is strong in body and quite capable of doing me harm. I must get rid of him and make sure he never comes back," he thought to himself. One day, the teacher called Ahimsaka and said: "You have successfully finished your studies, now you must bring me my fee." "Certainly," said Ahimsaka. "What do you demand as your fee?" "You must bring me a thousand first fingers from the human hand." "Surely you don't require this of me?" responded the horrified Ahimsaka. "You have taken from me and in return you must now do my bidding. Go now and bring a thousand fingers." The teacher's hope was, of course, that in the process of carrying out this task Ahimsaka would be killed and he would never have to see him again.

67. The unhappy student returned to Kosala and went to live in the Jalani forest and reluctantly at first, but later without compunction, he began waylaying lone travellers, killing them, cutting off one of their fingers and living off the possessions he stole. At first he hung the fingers on a tree where the birds would pick at the flesh, after which the bones would drop to the ground and be

scattered. So after a while, Ahimsaka would thread the fingers on a cord and hang them around his neck. This gave him a terrible appearance, and the by then notorious and feared murderer came to be known as Angulimala (Finger Necklace). Eventually, through murder, and perhaps by cutting fingers from corpses that in ancient India were not buried, but cast away in charnel grounds, Angulimala had accumulated 999 fingers.

68. His parents came to hear that the murderer whom everyone was talking about was their own son. Embarrassed and ashamed, the old Brahmin disowned his son. His mother could not bring herself to do so and she planned to go into the forest where her son was known to operate and try to talk to him. Just when it looked like Angulimala might even kill his own mother, he came into contact with the Buddha.

69. When the Buddha heard about Angulimala, he quietly left the Jetavana and set out for the Jalani forest, some forty kilometres away. As the Buddha walked along the road, groups of travellers passed him and as they did, they warned him not to continue alone because of the danger. He simply smiled and continued on his way. When Angulimala saw the Buddha, he was most surprised. “This is wonderful indeed. Usually only travellers in groups of twenty, thirty or forty come along this road and here is an ascetic travelling alone. I will kill him.”

Seizing his sword and shield, Angulimala emerged from the jungle and began to chase the Buddha, but although he ran as fast as he could, he could not catch up with the Buddha, who only walked. He put on a burst of speed but still could not get near the Buddha. Utterly bewildered, he shouted out: “Stand still, ascetic!” The Buddha turned around and looked at him, and replied: “I am still. Why don’t you be still also?” Even more bewildered Angulimala asked: “What do you mean, ascetic?” “I am still in that I harm no living being. You kill and therefore you are not still,” replied the Buddha.

70. The terrible things that he had done and the wretchedness of his life dawned on Angulimala and he broke down and sobbed. He threw down his weapons, bowed at the Buddha’s feet and asked to become a monk. The Buddha ordained him and together they set out for Savatthi. A few days later, as the Buddha and Angulimala were sitting in the Jetavana, King Pasenadi and a retinue of fully armed soldiers came to visit.

> “Where are you off to, O King?” asked the Buddha. “Has a border dispute broken out with Magadha?”
> “No, Lord,” said the king. “There is a terrible murderer operating in the kingdom. Because of him, people in outlying areas pack up their belongings, leave their villages and move to the safety of the city. Now the citizens have petitioned me to get

rid of him and I am setting out to find him."

"If you heard that this murderer had given up his terrible life and become a monk, what would you do, O King?"

"I suppose I would bow to him and treat him as I would any other monk. But is such a thing possible, Lord?"

The Buddha stretched out his arm and said: "This, O King, is Angulimala."

The king drew back in fear, but the Buddha reassured him: "Do not be afraid, O King. There is no need for alarm." The king came closer, looked carefully at the monk and asked: "Is this really Angulimala, Lord?"

"Yes, O King." Then he addressed Angulimala: "What is your father's name? What clan does your mother belong to?"

"My father is Gagga and my mother is a Mantani."

"Then may they be of good cheer. If you need any requisites I will make an effort to provide them for you," said the king nervously.

"Thank you, sire. But I have enough robes," replied Angulimala.

Then King Pasenadi came and sat near the Buddha and said: "Lord, it is truly wonderful that without stick or sword you are able to pacify those whom I cannot pacify with sticks or swords."

The Buddha smiled.

71. Angulimala led a life of simplicity and solitude, and under the Buddha's guidance eventually attained enlightenment. But even then, there were many who remembered his terrible past and people would shun him. Often, he would return from his alms round with no food and sometimes people would throw stones at him. Once he returned from his alms round with blood and cuts all over him having been attacked by an angry mob. The Buddha comforted him, saying: "You must endure this, Angulimala. You must silently endure this. This is a result of the deeds you have done previously."[1]

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Anāthapindika –
The Feeder Of The Poor

72. In the 5th century B.C.E., trade and commerce were already highly developed in India. Caravans travelled from one city to another and financial houses made money available for loan. If a person had skill and was prepared to take risks, it was quite possible to make a lot of money and perhaps even become a millionaire (*setthi*). One of the Buddha's most famous lay disciples was such a man. His name was Sudatta but because he was always ready to give to the hungry, the homeless or the dispossessed, he was known by everybody as Anāthapindika, meaning 'the feeder of the poor'.

73. Anāthapindika lived in Savatthi but he travelled a lot on business and one day while in Rajagaha, he went to visit his brother-in-law. The household was so busy with preparations for a feast that Anāthapindika failed to get his usual warm welcome. "What is the big occasion?" Anāthapindika asked his brother-in-law. "Are you preparing for a great wedding or perhaps a visit from the king?" "No," was the reply. "The Buddha and his monks are coming for a meal tomorrow." Just hearing the word 'Buddha' filled Anāthapindika with such joy that he could hardly contain himself. "You mean that a fully enlightened being has aris-

en in the world? How wonderful! Take me to meet him." Anāthapindika wanted to go straight away but he was persuaded that it was too late and that it would be better to do so the next morning. That night Anāthapindika was so excited that he could hardly sleep and he got up several times thinking it was already dawn. Eventually, thinking that the sun would be rising soon, Anāthapindika set off to meet the Buddha, but as he entered the outskirts of the city and it was still dark, he became frightened and decided to turn back. Suddenly, a friendly spirit appeared illuminating the whole area and urged him to continue. "Walk on, friend. To move forward is better for you than to turn back." Encouraged by these words, Anāthapindika continued and soon came across the Buddha walking up and down in the early morning light. The Buddha saw Anāthapindika hesitating to come closer and he beckoned him. "Come forward, Sudatta." Astonished that the Buddha would know his real name and awed by the great man's presence, Anāthapindika hurried forward and bowed at the Buddha's feet. The two men talked together for a while and as the sun came up, Anāthapindika understood the essence of the Dhamma and became a Stream-Winner.

Anāthapindika then asked the Buddha if he could offer him a meal the next day and the Buddha accepted. All during the day he thought how wonderful it would be if the Buddha could come to Savatthi and how many people would benefit from the visit. Consequently, the next day, after the Buddha had finished his meal, Anāthapindika asked him if

he would come and visit Savatthi. The Buddha thought for a while and then agreed, adding: “Enlightened ones prefer to stay in peaceful places”, and Anāthapindika responded: “I fully understand, Lord.”

74. When Anāthapindika finished his business in Rajagaha, he set out for Savatthi, and as soon as he arrived he began to make preparations for the Buddha’s arrival. First, he had to find a suitable place for the Buddha and his monks to stay, near the city but not too noisy. The best place proved to be a pleasure park about one kilometre south-west from the walls of Savatthi, owned by Prince Jeta. Anāthapindika approached the prince and asked him if he wanted to sell his park. He declined. “Name a price,” Anāthapindika insisted, but Prince Jeta reiterated that he was not interested in selling. “I will pay you any price you like,” Anāthapindika said, and in order to put him off, the prince said: “All right! You can have the park for however much it costs to cover the ground with gold coins.” To the prince’s astonishment, Anāthapindika enthusiastically agreed and left straight away to get the money. Soon a wagon, full of gold pieces, arrived at the park and servants began spreading the money on the ground. When Prince Jeta saw this, he realised how determined Anāthapindika was to get the park and finally decided to accept a more reasonable price for it. Anāthapindika then spent a huge amount of money building living quarters, assembly halls, storerooms and pavilions, laying out gardens and digging ponds while Prince Jeta offered to build an impressive gate

house leading into the park and a wall around it for privacy. In recognition of the two men who made all this possible, the monastery was named Jeta's Grove, Anāthapindika's Park or just Jeta's Grove (*Jetavana*) for short.[1]

75. From the age of sixty, the Buddha spent every rainy season except his last at Jetavana and delivered more discourses there than at any other location. The Buddha's favourite places in Jetavana were two small houses, the Kosambakuti and the Gandhakuti. The Gandhakuti (Fragrant Hut) got its name because the flowers that people constantly brought to offer to the Buddha gave the building such a pleasing fragrance. The Gandhakuti had a sitting room, bedroom and bathroom and a staircase leading up to it where the Buddha used to sometimes stand in the evening and address the monks. One of Ananda's duties was to regularly dust and clean the Gandhakuti, remove the faded flowers and put the chair and bed back in their proper place.

In 1863, the ruins of Jetavana were discovered and later archaeological investigation identified the Gandhakuti and the Kosambakuti, and showed that the Jetavana was a centre of Buddhism from the Buddha's time right up until the 13th century C.E.

76. Although Anāthapindika built the Jetavana, this was certainly not the extent of his generosity. Over the years he spent vast amounts of money providing the five requisites

for monks, building and maintaining monasteries, and doing charity in the name of Buddhism. He understood that if wealth is used with generosity and compassion, it can be a real means for spiritual development.

77. But Anāthapindika did not just have generosity with his wealth, he had generosity of spirit also. When he was young he had a friend named Kalakanni, which means 'unlucky', and the two boys used to make mud pies together as they played. As they grew up, Anāthapindika became rich while Kalakanni seemed to be plagued by one misfortune after another and remained poor. Hoping that his old friend might help him, Kalakanni went one day, hesitant and ashamed, to see Anāthapindika to ask if he could give him a job. Happy to help, Anāthapindika gave him a job looking after the property in one of his houses. Anāthapindika's family were not happy to have Kalakanni in the house. "How can you employ this man? He's nothing but a derelict. We are a respectable family while he is little more than a beggar. And besides, hearing that name Kalakanni being used in the house all day is bound to bring bad luck." Anāthapindika replied: "A person is not made by his name. The superstitious judge people by their names but the wise judge them by the goodness of their hearts. I shall not turn Kalakanni out simply because he is poor or because of his name. We have been friends since we were children." Anāthapindika's family were silent but they were still not happy. One day Kalakanni had to return to his village for a while and when a group of thieves heard that he

would be out of the house, they decided they would break in and rob the house. That night they came to the house not knowing that Kalakanni's departure had been delayed. He awoke, and heard the thieves talking outside the window, and realising that there were several of them and that they were all heavily armed, he immediately jumped up, talking loudly, banging doors, lighting lamps in different rooms and generally made as much noise as he could. The thieves thought that there was a party in the house and they fled. When this became known, Anāthapindika called his family, who were now very grateful to Kalakanni, and said to them, "If this house had not been guarded by such a wise and loyal friend, it would have been plundered. If I had taken your advice, we would all be in a very different position today. It is not name or wealth that makes a person, but his heart." Kalakanni was given a raise and came to be accepted by the household.[2]

78. Anāthapindika's great wealth and equally great generosity prompted many of the Buddha's discourses, some of them related to the subject of the skilful use of wealth. But sometimes, Anāthapindika had to be reminded that it is not the lavishness of a gift that is important and also that there are some things more important than generosity, things like love and understanding, for example. In the Velama Sutta, the Buddha told Anāthapindika about a man who had once given lavish gifts, but because no one really benefited, his gift had very little good effect.

> "If he had fed a hundred people who had Perfect View, it would have had a greater effect. If he had fed a hundred Once-Returners, the effect would have been greater still. If he had fed a hundred Non-Returners, the effect would have been greater than this. If he had fed a hundred Noble Ones, it would have been greater than this. Feeding the whole Sangha with the Buddha at its head would have been yet again greater. If he had built a monastery for the use of the Sangha, it would have had a greater effect. Taking Refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and keeping the Precepts would be greater still. Better yet would be to fill the heart with love. Best of all would be to develop the thought of love even if only for a moment."[3]

Later in life, Anāthapindika became quite poor due to his constant giving and also due to some unwise business decisions. Eventually, he became ill but Sariputta and Ananda visited him regularly, comforting him with talk on Dhamma.[4] Throughout its history, Buddhism has been assisted in its establishment and spread by the generous support it has received from wealthy merchants and businessmen, but the first and greatest of these was Anāthapindika.

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Crisis In Kosambi

79. Kosambi was a large city surrounded by huge walls and situated on the banks of the Yamuna River. Because it was at a junction of several highways, it had become a centre for trade and commerce. Three of the city's most wealthy merchants, Ghosita, Kukkuta and Pavarika were also close friends, engaging in business deals together and having a common interest in religion. Ghosita had risen from humble origin to become treasurer to King Udena of Kosambi. His mother was a prostitute who had thrown him on a rubbish heap when he was born. A passer-by rescued the child and eventually he was taken in by the royal treasurer, who wanted another son. Named Ghosita, the boy grew and was treated as a member of the family. But after a few years, the treasurer's wife gave birth to a son and suddenly Ghosita was not wanted any longer. The treasurer arranged to have a potter kill the boy and dispose of the body. Ghosita was sent to the potter carrying a message saying that he was the boy to be killed. On the way, he met his foster-brother and not wanting to go on what he thought was just an errand, he offered to play marbles with his foster-brother, the loser having to go to the potter. Ghosita won the game and the other boy took the letter and was killed. Sometime later, in another attempt to kill him, Ghosita was sent to one of the treasurer's wealthy tax collectors in an outlying

region, again with another letter saying that the boy should be killed. On the way Ghosita stopped for a meal in a rich man's house and when the man's daughter saw him, she immediately fell in love with him. As they talked, the girl asked to see the letter Ghosita was carrying and when she read it and explained its contents to him, Ghosita was shocked. They decided to write another letter saying that the tax collector should marry the boy and girl, build them a house to live in and look after them. They set out together with the letter and when they arrived, the tax collector read the letter and carried out its instructions. Ghosita and his young wife lived happily for several years and one day they heard that the treasurer was critically ill and likely to die. The young couple set out for Kosambi to visit the treasurer on his death-bed. When they entered the room, the treasurer saw them and with his dying breath said, "I will not let you inherit my wealth." However, his words were not clear and everyone thought he had said: "I will let you inherit my wealth," and so Ghosita got a part of the inheritance. With the money he received, he went into business and became very wealthy, and because of his skill with money, was eventually appointed treasurer.

80. Ghosita and his friends had heard about the Buddha and one day while in Savatthi on business, he went to meet the Buddha and invited him to come to Kosambi. Each of the three friends offered the Buddha a pleasure park which gradually grew into monasteries. Ghosita's

park, which was just inside the east gate of Kosambi, came to be known as Ghositarama and grew into a great centre for the study of Dhamma.

81. The Buddha stayed in Kosambi on several occasions and delivered many discourses there. His most famous disciple there was the woman Khujjuttara. She was a slave working in King Udena's harem, and as Queen Samavati and the other women were not allowed to leave the harem, one of her jobs was to run errands for the queen and the other women in the harem. One day, Khujjuttara went to the garden to buy flowers for the queen, as she usually did, and while there, she heard the Buddha teaching the Dhamma, and understanding it so well she became a Stream-Winner. On returning to the harem, she told the queen about the Dhamma and delighted by what she heard, the queen thereafter sent her regularly to hear the Buddha so she could repeat what she heard. In this manner, Khujjuttara became an expert in Dhamma, in fact, the Buddha called her the most deeply learned of all his female lay disciples. All the discourses in the Itivuttaka, one of the most important books in the Tipitaka, were preserved by Khujjuttara and taught by her to the monks.

82. It was at Kosambi that the first serious crisis occurred in the Sangha. Two monks were living together in the same hut. The first of these monks was an expert in monastic discipline and was also conscientious and

sincere. One day, this monk went to the toilet and when finished, failed to refill the water pot. His companion scolded him and accused him of breaking a rule. A bitter argument gradually developed, the second monk insisting that the first had broken a rule and the first insisting that he had not.[1] Eventually all the monks in Kosambi got involved, taking either one side or the other, and the whole community became "disputatious, quarrelsome and contentious, wounding each other with the weapon of the tongue."[2] The Buddha tried again and again to bring about a reconciliation but when the monks curtly told him to mind his own business, he decided to show his disapproval of their unruly behaviour by walking out on them. He tidied up the room where he was staying, took his robe and bowl, and left for more congenial surroundings, saying as he left:

> "He abused me, he hit me,
> He oppressed me, he robbed me."
> Those who continue to hold such thoughts
> Never still their hatred.
>
> "He abused me, he hit me,
> He oppressed me, he robbed me."
> Those who do not hold such thoughts
> Soon still their hatred.
>
> For in this world
> Hatred is never appeased by more hatred.

It is love that conquers hatred.
This is an eternal law.[3]

83. Not far from Kosambi was a park called the Eastern Bamboo Grove where a group of monks headed by Venerable Anuruddha stayed, and the Buddha decided to go there. When he arrived, the park keeper, not knowing who he was, refused to let him enter saying, "There are monks here who love silence. Please do not disturb them." Anuruddha saw this and told the park keeper to relent and welcome the Buddha. It was immediately obvious to the Buddha that, in stark contrast to the monks at Kosambi, these monks were living together in harmony and were practising with diligence. The Buddha asked them how they were able to do this. Anuruddha answered:

> "Concerning this I think: 'Indeed, it is a gain for me, indeed it is good that I am living with such companions in the holy life.' I practise bodily, verbal and mental acts of love towards them, both in public and in private. I think: 'Why don't I set aside my own wishes and acquiesce to their wishes,' And then I act accordingly. Truly, we are different in body, but we are one in mind. This is how we are able to live together in friendliness and harmony, like milk and water mixed, looking on each other with the eye of affection." He then went on to describe the consideration they

showed towards each other in their daily life. "Whoever returns from going to the village for alms food gets the seats ready, sets out water for drinking and washing, and puts out the refuge bowl. Whoever returns from the village last eats what is left of the food, or if he does not want it, throws it away where there are no crops or throws it in water where there are no creatures. He puts away the seats, the water bowl and refuge bowl, and sweeps the dining hall. Whoever sees the bowl for drinking water, the bowl for washing water or the water bowl in the toilet empty, he fills it. If he cannot do this himself, by using hand signals he invites his companions to help him, but we do not for such a minor thing break into speech. And then, once every five nights, we sit down together and talk about the Dhamma."[4]

84. After staying at the Eastern Bamboo Grove for a while, the Buddha felt the need for a period of complete solitude and so he went to the forest near the village of Parileyya. The forest was a well-known haunt for wild animals and few people went there, and the Buddha was prepared to go without food in order to be completely alone for a while. He settled down at the foot of a beautiful sal tree and spent his time meditating. After a while, a huge bull elephant appeared and placed the water it was holding in its trunk in the Buddha's bowl. A monkey also would pick fruit and each day bring it to the Bud-

dha. With the help of these animals, he was able to spend time without having any contact with people. Like many people since, the Buddha felt that the beauty of the forest and the company of animals could be a welcome reprieve from the noise and bustle of society.[5]

85. After staying at Parileyya for some time the Buddha left, and not wanting to return to Kosambi, he went to Savatthi. Meanwhile, back in Kosambi, the lay people decided to withdraw their support from the monks, who started coming back from their alms rounds with their bowls empty. Gradually, they found less reason to carry on their dispute and as their tempers cooled down, they began to feel ashamed of themselves. Eventually, a delegation of monks went to Savatthi to see the Buddha to ask for his forgiveness, which he gave, thus bringing the Kosambi dispute to an end.

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The Son Of The Enlightened One

86. Just before Prince Siddhattha renounced the world, his wife Yasodhara gave birth to a son. According to legend, when the birth was announced to the prince, he said, "A fetter (*rahula*) has been born, a bondage has been born," and this is how the boy got his name. It is more likely that he was named after a lunar eclipse (*rāhu*) that might have occurred around the time of his birth. Either way, the birth of this child only served to make Prince Siddhattha's desire to escape from what had become for him a golden cage, even more difficult. On the evening he had finally decided to leave, the Buddha peered into the royal bedchamber to take one last look at his sleeping wife and child, but the mother's arm obscured the child's face.

87. Seven years after he left, the Buddha returned to Kapilavatthu. Yasodhara took the little Rahula to listen to the Buddha's preaching. When they arrived, she said to him: "This is your father, Rahula. Go and ask him for your inheritance." The child walked through the assembly and stood before the Buddha, saying, "How pleasant is your shadow, O Monk." When the talk had finished and the Buddha left, Rahula followed him, and as they

walked along Rahula said: "Give me my inheritance, O Monk." Of course the Buddha no longer had gold or property but he had something far more precious – the Dhamma, so he turned to Sariputta and said: "Sariputta, ordain him."[1] Later, the Buddha's father, Suddhodana, and Yasodhara complained that the boy had been taken away without their permission, as a result of which the Buddha made it a rule that parental consent was necessary before someone could be ordained.[2]

88. As if to make up for the seven years he was without a father, the Buddha took great interest in Rahula's moral and spiritual education, teaching him many times himself, and making Sariputta his preceptor and Moggallana his teacher. Rahula responded to this excellent tutelage by being an eager and attentive student and it is said that each morning as he awoke, he would take a handful of sand and say: "May I have today, as many words of counsel from my teacher as there are here grains of sand." As a result of this enthusiasm, the Buddha said of his son that of all his disciples, he was the most anxious for training. When Rahula was still a boy, the Buddha discussed with him aspects of Dhamma that were suitable for the young and in such a way as he could understand and remember.

89. Once, he got a pot of water and calling Rahula to his side said to him:

"Rahula, do you see the small amount of water in this pot?"
"Yes, sir."
"Even so, little is the training of those who have no shame at intentional lying."
The Buddha then threw the water away and said: "Do you see this small amount of water that I have thrown away?"
"Yes, sir."
"Even so, Rahula, thrown away is the training of those who have no shame at intentional lying."
The Buddha then turned the pot over and said: "Do you see this pot that has been turned over?"
"Yes, sir."
"Even so, turned over is the training of those who have no shame at intentional lying."
The Buddha then turned the pot upright again and said: "Do you see this pot now empty and void?"
"Yes, sir."
"Even so, Rahula, empty and void is the training of those who have no shame at intentional lying."
The Buddha then impressed upon his son the importance of speaking the truth.
"Rahula, for anyone who has no shame at intentional lying, there is no evil that that person cannot do. Therefore, you should train yourself like this: 'I will not tell a lie, not even in jest.'"

Having explained what has to be done, the Buddha went on to explain to Rahula how it could be done.

> "What do you think about this, Rahula? What is the purpose of a mirror?"
> "The purpose of a mirror is to look at yourself."
> "Even so, Rahula, one should act with body, speech or mind only after first looking at oneself. Before acting with body, speech or mind, one should think: 'What I am about to do, will it harm me or others?' If you can answer: 'Yes, it will,' then you should not act. But if you can answer: 'No, it will not,' then you should act. You should reflect in the same way while acting and after having acted. Therefore, Rahula, you should train yourself thinking: 'We will act only after repeatedly looking at ourselves, only after reflecting on ourselves.'"[3]

90. Rahula was trained in the Ten Precepts and monastic discipline and when he was eighteen, the Buddha decided that he was ready for meditation and then gave him advice on how to practise.

> "Rahula, develop a mind that is like the four great elements (earth, water, fire and air) because if you do this, pleasant or unpleasant sensory impressions that have arisen and taken hold of the mind will not persist. Just as when people

throw faeces, urine, spittle, pus or blood on the earth or in the water, in a fire or the air, the earth, the water, the fire or the air is not troubled, worried or disturbed. So too, develop a mind that is like the four great elements. Develop love, Rahula, for by doing so ill-will will be got rid of. Develop compassion, for by doing so the desire to harm will be got rid of. Develop sympathetic joy, for by doing so, dislike will be got rid of. Develop equanimity, for by doing so sensory reaction will be got rid of. Develop the perception of the foul for by doing so, attachment will be got rid of. Develop the perception of impermanence for by doing so, the conceit, 'I am', will be got rid of. Develop mindfulness of breathing for it is of great benefit and advantage."[4]

Following his father's advice and guidance on meditation, Rahula finally attained enlightenment. He was eighteen at the time. After that his friends always referred to him as Rahula the Lucky (*Rahulabhadda*) and he tells why he was given this name.

They call me Rahula the Lucky for two reasons:
One is that I am the Buddha's son.
And the other is that I have seen the truth.[5]

91. Other than this, we know very little about Rahula. He does not seem to have been prominent at being either

a Dhamma teacher or a trainer of other monks. It is likely that Rahula kept himself in the background so that he could not be accused of taking advantage of being the son of the Enlightened One.

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Famous Lay Disciples

92. It is often mistakenly thought that it is the job of monks and nuns to practise and teach the Dhamma, while it is the job of lay men and women to practise the Five Precepts and support the monks and nuns by providing them with their needs. This is an incorrect and dangerous belief, and in countries where it is widely accepted it has helped lead to a corruption of the Dhamma. The Buddha's goal was to develop a community of disciples, ordained and lay, men and women, who were well-educated in the Dhamma, who practised it fully, and who taught it to and learned it from each other.[1] While the Buddha praised Anāthapindika for his great generosity, he reserved his highest praise for Citta of Macchikāsanda and Hatthaka of Alavi because they were both skilful in and diligent at giving something infinitely more precious than material things – the Dhamma.[2]

93. Citta was the model Buddhist layman whose learning and behaviour the Buddha urged others to emulate. On one occasion, the Buddha said to the monks: "Should a devoted mother wish to encourage her beloved only son in a proper way she should say to him: 'Try to become like the disciple Citta and the disciple Hatthaka of Alavi.'"[3] Citta was a rich merchant and landowner in the town of Macchikāsanda, not far from Savatthi. He seems

to have heard the Dhamma for the first time from the monk Mahanama, after which he offered to the Sangha a park he owned and in it built a spacious monastery. After that, any monks or nuns coming to Macchikāsanda were always assured of a warm welcome and adequate support. The Buddha considered Citta to be the most learned and lucid of all the lay Dhamma teachers. After accepting the Dhamma, he explained it to the other citizens of the town, converting five hundred of them, and on one occasion took all of the new converts to Savatthi to see the Buddha. The discourses in the Tipitaka preached to and by Citta indicate his profound grasp of the most subtle aspects of the Dhamma and indeed later he became a Non-Returner.

94. Once a group of monks were sitting In a pavilion in the monastery that Citta had built discussing Dhamma. Some were saying that it is the sense objects that fetter the mind while others suggested that it is the sense organs that cause the problems. Citta arrived at the monastery, and when he saw the monks he asked what they were discussing, and they told him. Citta said, "Sirs, these two things, sense objects and sense organs, are different. I will use a simile so that you can understand what I mean. Suppose a black ox and a white ox were tied together with a yoke or rope. Now would it be right to say that the black ox was the fetter of the white ox or that the white ox was the fetter of the black ox?"

"Certainly not," answered the monks. "The black ox is not the fetter of the white ox nor is the white ox the fetter of the black ox. They are both fettered by the yoke or rope." Citta agreed and then said: "Well, sirs, in the same way, the eye is not the fetter of visual objects nor are visual objects the fetter of the eye. But rather, the desire that arises from the meeting of the two, that is the fetter. And it is the same with the other sense organs and their objects." The monks were delighted by Citta's lucidity in explaining and answering the question.[4]

95. On another occasion, the monk Kamabhu, perplexed by one of the Buddha's sayings, asked Citta if he could explain what it meant. The saying was:

> Pure-limbed, white-canopied, one-wheeled,
> The chariot rolls on.
> Look at he who is coming,
> He is a faultless stream-cutter, he is boundless.

Citta explained the verse with great originality and insight. He said: "'Pure-limbed' means virtue, 'white-canopied' means freedom, 'onewheeled' means mindfulness, 'rolls on' means coming and going. 'Chariot' means the body, 'he who is coming' means the enlightened one, 'stream' means craving, 'faultless', 'stream-cutter' and 'boundless' all mean one who has destroyed the defilements." Citta's ability to give a spiritual interpretation to what appeared to be merely a beautiful verse surprised

and delighted Kamabhu.[5]

96. But Citta was not just able to teach the Dhamma, he was also able to demonstrate its superiority over other doctrines. Once Nigantha Nataputta, the founder of Jainism and one of the most well-known religious teachers of the time, arrived in Macchikāsanda with a large number of his disciples. Citta went to meet Nataputta who, knowing he was a disciple of the Buddha, asked him, "Do you believe, as the Buddha teaches, that it is possible to attain a meditative state where all thought stops?" "No," answered Citta, "The Buddha teaches this but I do not believe it." Surprised and pleased that Citta seemed to be saying that he doubted some of the Buddha's teaching, Nataputta looked around at all his disciples saying as he did, "See what a straightforward and clever person Citta is. Anyone who could believe in a meditative state where all thought stops might just as well believe that the mind can be caught in a net or that the Ganges can be stopped flowing by using the hand." When he had finished, Citta asked: "What is better, venerable sir, to know or to believe?" "Knowledge is far better than belief," replied Nataputta. "Well, I can attain that meditative state where all thought ceases. So why should I believe what the Buddha says is true. I know it is true." Annoyed at being caught out, Nataputta again looked around at his disciples and said: "See what a cunning, deceitful and crooked person this Citta is." Remaining calm and unruffled by this outburst, Citta said: "If your first statement is true

then your second one must be false, and if your second statement is true then your first one must be false," and having said that he got up and left, leaving Nataputta struggling for a reply.[6]

97. Later in life, Citta became ill and it was obvious to his family that he did not have long to live. As he lay on his deathbed, devas gathered around him telling him to set his mind on being reborn into a position of wealth and power. Knowing that he was a Non-Returner, destined to be reborn into one of the high heaven realms, he said to the devas, "That is impermanent and will have to be left behind in the end." Not being able to see the devas, Citta's family and friends thought he was delirious. Citta told them he was talking to devas and then, after urging those gathered around to take refuge in the Three Jewels, he peacefully passed away.[7]

98. Another eminent lay disciple was Hatthaka of Alavi, a son of the ruler of Alavi. Hatthaka first met the Buddha as he was walking one winter evening. Surprised to see this lone ascetic in just one thin robe and sleeping on the hard ground, Hatthaka asked the Buddha, "Are you happy?" The Buddha replied, "Yes, I am happy." "But sir," Hatthaka asked, "the ground is hard and the wind is cold, how can you be happy?" The Buddha asked: "Despite living in a cosy, well-thatched house, with a comfortable bed and two wives to look after him, is it possible that due to greed, anger, fear or ambition that a

man might feel unhappy?" "Yes," answered Hatthaka, "that is quite possible." "Well," said the Buddha, "I have got rid of all greed, anger, fear and ambition, so whether I sleep here or in a cosy house, I am always happy, always very happy.[8]

99. Hatthaka was famous not so much for his generosity or his knowledge of Dhamma, but for his ability to attract people to the Dhamma. Once he brought five hundred people, all obviously keen to practise the Dhamma, to see the Buddha who asked him: "How do you manage to interest so many people in the Dhamma?" Hatthaka answered: "Lord, I do it by using the four bases of sympathy, which you yourself taught me. When I know that someone can be attracted by generosity, I am generous. When I know that they can be attracted by kind words, I speak to them with kindness. When I know that they can be attracted by doing them a good turn, I do them a good turn, and when I know they can be attracted by treating them equally, I treat them with equality." Obviously, when people attended talks on Dhamma organised by Hatthaka, they always received a warm personal welcome that made them feel liked and respected, and so they would come again, gradually getting interested in the Dhamma. The Buddha praised Hatthaka for his skill. "Well done, Hatthaka, well done, this is the way to attract people." After Hatthaka had left, the Buddha said to the monks: "Consider it true that Hatthaka of Alavi is possessed of these eight marvellous and wonderful qualities. He has

faith, virtue, conscientiousness and fear of blame, he is learned, generous, wise and modest."[9]

100. Modesty, in particular, was evident in Hatthaka's character. While some take great pride in their wealth or are motivated by selfaggrandisement to convert others to the Dhamma, Hatthaka was always quiet and unassuming. He did all he could to interest people in the Dhamma purely out of concern for them, not to make a name for himself. On another occasion, when the monks told Hatthaka that the Buddha had praised his many good qualities, he said, "I hope there were no lay people present when the Lord did this." The monks assured him that there were none and later when they told this to the Buddha, he said, "Well done, well done. That man is genuinely modest. He does not like his good qualities to be known by others. Modesty is another of Hatthaka's good qualities."[10]

When Hatthaka died he was reborn as a deva, and one night he came to visit the Buddha. The Buddha asked him if he had any regrets and he replied, "I died regretting only that I never saw enough of the Buddha, heard enough Dhamma or was able to serve the Dhamma enough."[11]

101. At the Buddha's time, women had little role in society except as wives or mothers. But when the Sangha of nuns was established, women immediately had an avenue

for spiritual development and the opportunity to prove themselves as religious adepts and teachers – roles that they took to with great success. The Buddha praised the nun Khema for her great wisdom, Patacara for her expertise in monastic discipline and Dhammadinna for her energy and skill in teaching the Dhamma.[12] And it was not just nuns who became model disciples, laywomen did also. One of the most important of the Buddha's laywomen disciples was Samavati, whose story is a long and interesting one.

102. Once a man and his wife lived in a particular village in Vamsa with their uncommonly beautiful daughter named Samavati. The family was a happy one but one summer an epidemic broke out in the village killing many people and forcing the others to flee. Samavati and her parents together with many others went to Kosambi, the capital of Vamsa, hoping to find relief. The city was full of refugees and concerned citizens had set up facilities to provide food for them. When the food was distributed each noon, pushing and scuffling would break out as desperate refugees would try to grasp as much as they could in the fear that by tomorrow there would be none. When Samavati first came for food, she asked for enough for three people, soon she was asking for enough for two and eventually only enough for one. Mitta, the man who distributed the food at the place where Samavati went, noticed this and one day said to her sarcastically: "So, you have finally worked out how much your stomach can

hold, have you?" "No," explained Samavati, "at first, I had to get enough for myself and my parents. Then my father died, so I only needed enough for two. Then my mother died, so now I only need enough for myself." When Mitta heard this, he felt very ashamed of his sarcasm and apologised to Samavati. She told Mitta about how she had fallen on hard times and moved by sympathy, Mitta asked Samavati if he could adopt her as his daughter – an offer that she gratefully accepted.

103. Now that her position had improved, Samavati set about helping to improve the lot of the refugees. She brought order and discipline to the food distribution and soon, instead of noisy, pushing crowds, orderly queues were formed, ensuring that everyone got their fair share and no one went without. One day, Ghosita, a wealthy merchant who had been appointed royal treasurer, was touring the city and he noticed how efficiently the food distribution programme was going and he inquired from Mitta who was responsible for it. Ghosita was introduced to Samavati and as soon as he saw her, he was struck by her beauty and also by the patience with which she carried out her work. He asked Mitta if he could adopt Samavati. Mitta reluctantly agreed, knowing that Samavati would now be heir to a vast fortune. So it was that within a few months, Samavati had gone from destitution to wealth and status.

But soon she was to rise even higher. Now that she moved

in high circles, it was not long before she came to the notice of King Udena of Kosambi. The king already had two wives, Vasuladatta and Magandiya, both of whom, although physically beautiful, had rather unattractive characters and Udena was lonely and unhappy. As soon as he saw Samavati, he fell in love with her and resolved to have her as his wife. He informed Ghosita of his wish, a demand that filled Ghosita with sadness, as he deeply loved her and had come to look upon her as his real daughter. But although King Udena had a reputation of flying into a rage when he could not get what he wanted, Ghosita decided to refuse the king's request. The king was furious. He dismissed Ghosita from his post, expelled him from Kosambi and confiscated all his wealth. Samavati was deeply saddened by this, and to save her foster father she went to Udena and offered to become his wife, after which the king stopped his persecution of Ghosita. Samavati was patient and accepting by nature and so she soon settled into her new life in the royal palace and learned to put up with Udena's occasional outbursts of temper, and he in turn loved her deeply.

104. One of Samavati's servants was Khujjuttara, so called because she had a hunch back. Like the other women of the royal household, Samavati was confined to the palace. So when she wanted flowers to wear in her hair, she had to send her servant to get them. Each day, she would give eight pieces of money to Khujjuttara, who would spend four on the flowers and keep the rest for

herself. One day, as Khujjuttara was on her usual errand, she saw a group of people sitting, listening to the Buddha and out of curiosity, stopped to listen to what was being said. The Buddha noticed this woman at the back of the crowd and although she was ugly in appearance, he could tell that she had a good potential to understand the Dhamma. He changed the gist of his talk to a subject that he knew she could respond to and by the end of the talk she had become a Stream-Winner. Although she didn't know what had happened to her, she now felt remorseful about stealing Samavati's money and on her return, she bowed before the queen and confessed her wrong doing. She also told her about the Buddha and his teaching. Samavati was fascinated, both by the dramatic change in Khujjuttara and by what she heard about the Buddha's teaching, and after forgiving Khujjuttara she urged her to go and find out more about the Dhamma. So each day, Khujjuttara would go and listen to the Buddha and faithfully repeat everything she heard to Samavati, who eventually took the Three Refuges and later influenced all the other women in the royal household to do the same.

One day when he was in a particularly good mood and pleased with Samavati, King Udena offered to give her anything she desired. For a long time she had wanted to hear the Dhamma from the Buddha himself, so straight away she asked that the Buddha be invited to the palace, and the king gave orders for the invitation to be sent. The Buddha declined the invitation but instructed Ananda to

go in his place. Ananda gave a talk to the assembled nobles and by the time he had finished, Samavati had become a Stream-Winner. With Samavati's encouragement, many members of the royal household then became enthusiastic Buddhists, although the headstrong and volatile Udena expressed little interest in any religion, especially one that required a curbing of anger. But gradually, through Samavati's patient and gentle persuasion even he began to meditate, albeit reluctantly at first, eventually becoming more good-tempered.

105. Meanwhile, one of King Udena's other wives, Magandiya, became increasingly jealous of Samavati. She never missed the opportunity to make sarcastic comments, both to Samavati's face and behind her back, to ridicule her religion and belittle her genuine effort to practise it, and to depreciate her in the eyes of the king. Despite this, Samavati refused to retaliate and continued to be as polite and good natured to Magandiya as she was to everyone else, which only served to make Magandiya even more hostile. Next, she tried to turn the king against Samavati by making it look as if Samavati was plotting against him, but this was not successful either. Finally she decided to have Samavati killed. With the help of her relatives, Magandiya planned to have the women's quarters in the palace set on fire. So filled with hatred was she, that she was quite prepared to risk the lives of the other women who likewise lived there, just to kill her rival. The arsonists did their job and Samavati, together with nearly

five hundred other people, was killed in the fire. King Udena was devastated by Samavati's death and went into a long period of mourning. When he began to think about how the tragedy could have happened, it gradually became clear that it was not an accident. He suspected Magandiya, but as he knew that he could never pressure her into confessing, he decided to use other means. One day, in the presence of Magandiya, the king said to one of his ministers: "I've always suspected that Samavati was plotting against me. Now that she is gone, I can sleep in peace. Whoever got rid of her did me a great favour and if I knew who it was, I would give them a reward." Always ready to win the king's favour, Magandiya immediately came forward and told the king that she, with the help of her relatives, had burned down the women's quarters. Udena faked delight and told her to call her relations together so that they could be rewarded. Later, when Magandiya led her conspirators into the presence of the king, she could immediately see by the expression on his face that she had been tricked into making a terrible mistake. In an uncontrollable fury, Udena ordered Magandiya and the others to be arrested and then taken outside and burned alive. People were horrified by the king's actions but most believed that Magandiya had got what she had deserved.[13]

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Ajatasattu And Devadatta

106. Ever since he was young, Devadatta had been jealous of the Buddha, and even though he had become a monk, his jealousy persisted. He resented constantly being in the Buddha's shadow but he said nothing, hoping that if the Buddha died, or got too old to continue to lead the Sangha, he had a good chance of taking over, being as he was closely related to the Buddha. Devadatta was not without talent, despite his unpleasant nature; he had developed psychic powers, which had of course attracted to him many admirers. Unfortunately, his powers and the attention he received only served to make him more proud and ambitious.

107. At about this time it so happened that Prince Ajatasattu was becoming increasingly impatient to ascend to the throne. His father, King Bimbasara, had ruled for many years and it looked likely that he would continue to rule for many more, which meant that Ajatasattu himself would be old before he himself became king. Devadatta knew of Prince Ajatasattu's predicament and, seeing that he had something in common with him, decided that they should work together. He used his psychic powers to impress the prince. One day as Ajatasattu sat alone, suddenly a young boy draped in snakes appeared sitting in his lap. Utterly terrified, Ajatasattu pushed the child away

and with trembling voice asked: “Who are you?” “I, Prince, am Devadatta.” The prince replied with trembling voice: “If you are really Devadatta, then please assume your true form.” Devadatta complied and stood smiling in front of the astonished prince who said: “I am impressed, reverend sir. Truly you are a monk of high attainment.”

108. From that time, Devadatta had free access to the royal palace and Prince Ajatasattu often waited upon him with lavish food and expensive gifts. Having a powerful ally, Devadatta’s next step was to convince the Buddha to step down in his favour. One day, as the Buddha sat with a large company of monks, Devadatta came forward, bowed and said: “Lord, leading the Sangha at your age must be a great burden. Step down and I will lead the Sangha for you. I will take over this responsibility so that you can live in comfort.” He obviously thought that the other monks, concerned for the Buddha’s welfare would be delighted with this idea and urge the Buddha to retire. But the Buddha was well aware of Devadatta’s intentions and he was not to be influenced by the opinion of the majority. He firmly and harshly turned down the idea. “I would not even hand over the Sangha to Sariputta or Moggallana, let alone to you, you who should be coughed out like spittle.” Devadatta was humiliated by this rebuke and within his heart he vowed revenge.

One day, after Prince Ajatasattu had complained to him about his role as a prince, Devadatta said to him: “In the

past, people lived to a great age, now they do not and it is possible that you may die while still a prince. Kill your father and make yourself king. I will kill the Buddha and make myself leader of the Sangha." At first Ajatasattu was shocked by this suggestion but so strong was his ambition and desire for power that it didn't take much to get him to see the advantages of this scheme.

109. Soon, Devadatta hatched a plan to kill the Buddha with the help of Ajatasattu. They sent a man to assassinate the Buddha and arranged to have him murdered afterwards so that there would be no witness. However, the man had scruples and was not anxious to make evil kamma for himself by killing such a holy person. When he actually stood in front of the Buddha, he found it impossible to kill him. The man broke down and confessed to the Buddha what he had planned to do. The Buddha forgave him and he asked to become a lay disciple. When Devadatta heard this, he was furious and decided if the Buddha was going to be killed, he would have to do it himself. When the Buddha was at Rajagaha he usually stayed at the Gijjakuta, a small rocky hill a little beyond the east gate of Rajagaha. Devadatta climbed the Gijjakuta, and when he saw the Buddha walking up and down at the foot of the hill, he sent a large rock tumbling down towards him. Just before it reached the Buddha, it hit another rock which diverted it, although a splinter hit the Buddha injuring his foot. Some time later, Devadatta went to the royal stables, where a huge and

fierce elephant named Nalagiri was kept. He approached the mahouts and said to them: “I am close to the king. On my word, someone in a low position can be put in a high position and someone in a high position can be put in a low position. I want you to release this elephant into the Buddha’s path when he is walking down the road.” The mahouts readily agreed. The next day, the Buddha and a small group of monks walked through Rajagaha to collect alms. As they turned a corner into a narrow street, they found themselves confronted by an angry elephant. The monks called the Buddha to turn back but he continued to calmly walk on. People looked out of their windows and climbed onto the roofs of the houses to see what would happen. Nalagiri charged down the street. People ran to get out of the way, while others gasped with horror. The Buddha suffused Nalagiri with thoughts of loving kindness (*metta*) so that he quietened down, allowing the Buddha to approach him and stroke his head. This confrontation caused a sensation in Rajagaha and for weeks people went around the city singing a song about it. One of the verses said:

> Some are tamed by goad and whips
> But the elephant by the great sage was tamed
> By loving kindness, without sword or stick.

110. Meanwhile, one evening, Ajatasattu strapped a dagger to his thigh and full of fear, tried to enter the king’s bed chamber. But the guards challenged him and the plot

failed. King Bimbasara came to hear of his son's attempts to kill him and deeply saddened, he decided to step down in his favour. Although no longer king, Bimbasara still supported the Buddha, which worried Devadatta. So he egged on Ajatasattu to kill his father. "For as long as your father is alive, you are still in danger. You are like a man who puts a new skin on a drum with a rat in it." Bimbasara was imprisoned and deprived of food. Queen Kosaladevi, who was the only person allowed to visit the prisoner, smuggled food in, concealed in her clothes. When this was discovered, she was searched each time she came. So then she rubbed *catumadhura*, a nutritious cream, on her body and the old man would lick it off, which kept Bimbasara alive. When, after two weeks, he was still not dead, King Ajatasattu sent men into the prison cell to kill him. So ended the life of a just and popular king who was also one of the Buddha's most enthusiastic supporters.

111. After several attempts to kill the Buddha had failed, Devadatta decided that if he could not lead the Sangha, he would at least try to lead some monks.

The Buddha strived to transform the society in which he lived, questioning, and where necessary, even criticising many of the assumptions his contemporaries lived by. One thing he had little time for was the extreme and ostentatious austerities that many ascetics practised. Because he refused to indulge in any of these practices,

his opponents often accused him of being lax and of loving luxury. Even some Buddhist monks believed that the Sangha was losing its original austere character and that Buddhist monks should live as other ascetics lived. Devadatta took advantage of this dissatisfaction and started demanding stricter rules, a demand that won the support of some monks. Eventually, he and his followers went to the Buddha and demanded that he make five practices obligatory for all monks: that monks should only live in the forest, that they only eat food that they had begged for, that they only wear robes made out of rags, that they should not live in monasteries and that they should be vegetarian. The Buddha refused, because he knew that outward practices like these did not necessarily bring about a change in the heart. He also understood that such practices would cut the monks off from the lay community and that if this happened the Dhamma would remain the domain of a small exclusive group only. However, he also recognised that some monks were more comfortable with an austere lifestyle, so although he refused to make these practices compulsory, he said that individual monks could practise them if they wished.

112. While the Buddha was prepared to be flexible, Devadatta was not. He declared that he and his followers were going to set up a separate Sangha. The five hundred monks he led left Rajagaha for Gaya, where King Ajatasattu built them a monastery on Gavasisa, a rocky hill just south of the town. It was the greatest crisis in the

Buddha's life; the Sangha was split, accusations of lax discipline were being made and the lay people did not know which group to support. However, throughout the crisis, the Buddha remained calm and made no public condemnations of Devadatta. But something had to be done, so eventually the Buddha sent Sariputta and Moggallana to Gaya to try to win back the wayward monks. When Devadatta saw them coming he was exultant, thinking that they too had abandoned the Buddha. When they arrived he enthusiastically welcomed them and asked them to sit with him. They politely declined but sat down near him. Devadatta then gave a long talk, no doubt defending his stand on asceticism and criticising the Buddha, and then asked Sariputta and Moggallana to give a talk while he retired to sleep. After he had gone, Sariputta and Moggallana both gave calm and well-reasoned talks, explaining that no ascetic practices or, for that matter, any outward rites or acts in themselves could change the heart. They also appealed for loyalty to their compassionate teacher, the Buddha, and for unity and harmony in the Sangha. Their long-standing authority in the Sangha, their obvious freedom from rancour and the reasonableness of their point of view gradually convinced the five hundred monks.[1]

113. When Sariputta and Moggallana had finished, they said: "That is all we have to say. We will now return to Rajagaha." As they got up and left almost all the five hundred monks got up and followed them. When Deva-

datta awoke in the morning, he found he only had a few followers left. It is said that he was so angry that blood came out from his mouth. Alone and disgraced, in the following years Devadatta continued to complain about and criticise the Buddha to anyone who would listen. Some people did, but most ignored him or treated him with contempt. Towards the end of his life he began to regret his past actions and decided to apologise to the Buddha. But before the two men could meet again, Devadatta died. It is interesting to note that when Fa Hien, the Chinese pilgrim, was in India in the 5th century CE, there were still small groups who looked to Devadatta rather than the Buddha as their founder.

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Notes

The Sakyans

1. D,I:92.
2. M,I:354.
3. D,I:91.
4. D,III:83.
5. D,11:74.

What Was The Buddha Like?

1. M,I:163.
2. D,I:115.
3. A,I:181.
4. S,V:217.
5. D,II:100.
6. S,III:2.
7. M,II:140.
8. M,II:122.
9. M,I:108.
10. D,I:3.
11. A,V:150.
12. M,I:132.
13. A,I:136.
14. S,V:11.
15. D,III:38.
16. A,II:146.

The Teacher Of Gods And Men

1. Vin,IV:20.
2. D,II:104.
3. M,I:169.
4. D,I:110.
5. D,I:116.
6. D,II:124.
7. D,III:40.
8. S,V:15.
9. Vin,II:266.
10. Sn,780.
11. M,II:168.
12. A,I:185-88.
13. M,III:37.
14. D,I:120-121.
15. D,I:60-61.
16. M,II:145.
17. D,I:215-222.
18. Dp,51.
19. M,I:119.
20. M,I:395.
21. M,I:375.
22. Sn,136.
23. M,I:37.
24. M,I:375.
25. M,I:83.
26. D,II:149.

The Order Of Monks And Nuns

1. D,I:63.
2. D,I:71.
3. D,II:154. See also

M,III:39.

4. Vin,II:253.

The Two Chief Disciples

1. D,I:58.
2. Vin,IV:38-41.
3. S,I:191.
4. A,III:195.
5. J,III:392.
6. J,III:286.
7. D,I:78-84.
8. D,I:211.
9. Vin,V:110-111.
10. Vin,I:66.
11. S,V:269.

Ananda – The Man Whom Everybody Liked

1. D.II:143.
2. M,I:353.
3. Vin,IV:78.
4. eg S,V:154.
5. A,I:24.
6. D,II:144.

The Murderer Who Became A Saint

1. M,II:98-105.

Anathapindika – The Feeder Of The Poor

1. Vin,V:153-157.
2. J,I:364.
3. A,IV:392.
4. M,III:258.

Crisis In Kosambi

1. J,III:486.
2. M,III:152.
3. M,III:154. See also Dp,1-3.
4. M,III:156-157.
5. Ud,41.

The Son Of The Enlightened One

1. Vin,IV:81.
2. Vin,IV:82.
3. M,I:414.
4. M,I:423.
5. Thag,295.

Famous Lay Disciples

1. D,II:104.
2. A,I:26.
3. A,I:88.
4. S,IV:284.
5. S,IV:291.
6. S,IV:299.
7. S,IV:302.
8. A,I:136.
9. A,IV:218.
10. A,IV:216.
11. A,I:278.
12. A,I:25.
13. Dh,A:187-191, 205-225.

Ajatasattu And Devadatta

1. Vin,183-202.

For Further Reading

Footprints of Gautama the Buddha by M. Byles. 1972.

The author, a famous Australian Buddhist, paraphrases suttas from the Pali Tipitaka to narrate the life of the Buddha and his disciples.

The Buddha by Michael Carrithers. 1983.

Written by a scholar who has a deep sympathy for Buddhism, this scholarly but accessible book is one of the best accounts of the Buddha's life.

The Life of the Buddha as it Appears in the Pali Canon by Bhikkhu Nanamoli. 1972.

This book consists of translations from the Pali Tipitaka, strung together so as to tell the Buddha's life as it is recorded in the oldest documents.

The Life of The Buddha by H. Saddhatissa. 1976.

A popular retelling of the Buddha's life by one of Sri Lanka's foremost monk scholars.

The Historical Buddha by H. W. Schumann. 1989.

This superb book looks at the life of the Buddha from the point of view of history. It draws on history, archaeology and Buddhist texts to paint a complete picture of the Buddha and the world in which he lived.

Other books by Venerable Dhammika

Good Question, Good Answer

In response to commonly asked questions about Buddhism, Venerable Dhammika provides lucid, thought-provoking, and at times, witty responses. Already translated into several languages, this book has proved to be highly popular.

Encounters With Buddhism

This book consists of essays by fourteen people from both East and West and from a variety of different backgrounds, explaining how and why they became Buddhists. Fascinating reading. Edited by Venerable Dhammika, and with a preface by Professor Trevor Ling.

Matrceta's Hymn to the Buddha

Composed in about the first century AD, the Satapancasatka is one of the finest examples of Buddhist devotional literature. This rendering from the original Sanskrit successfully retains the beauty of the original.

Buddha Vacana – Daily Readings from the Sacred Literature of Buddhism

An Anthology from the Pali Tipitaka and some post-canonical literature, this unique book is arranged to

be read daily for a year. The translations and the choice of materials make the Buddha's words accessible to all.

Gemstones of the Good Dhamma

This small anthology brings together 210 inspiring verses from the Pali Tipitaka spoken by the Buddha and his enlightened disciples, arranged according to subject with Pali and English on facing pages.

Praised By The Wise

Throughout the centuries, the Buddha has been admired for his wisdom and compassion. Today, when most of the heroes of the past are now seen as 'human, all too human', the Buddha continues to evoke admiration and respect. Read what the great men and women of our time have said about the Buddha and his teaching.

Rahula Leads The Way

A book for children, with delightful full-colour illustrations, co-authored by Venerable Dhammika and Susan Harmer.

The Buddha and His Disciples

Taking a different perspective from the usual biographies of the Buddha, the author retells the great man's story using the society of the time as the backdrop and the Buddha's interactions with his contemporaries as the main theme. We discover what the

Buddha was really like as a person and how he changed the lives of all who were blessed enough to come into contact with him.

All About Buddhism – A modern introduction to an ancient spiritual tradition

If you have ever wondered about what the Buddha really taught, you must read this book. What is a Buddha? Should Buddhists be ambitious? What does Buddhism say about sex, marriage and divorce? How is meditation practised? These are just some of the many questions answered in this book. *All About Buddhism* presents this ancient teaching as it is – a humane and dynamic philosophy of life, as relevant today as when it was first proclaimed nearly 25 centuries ago.

Middle Land Middle Way – A pilgrim's guide to the Buddha's India

For thousands of years pilgrims from all over Asia have endured great hardships and dangers to visit the places where the Buddha lived and taught. In this book, the author skilfully weaves the Buddha's biography together with history and archaeology to produce a reliable and comprehensive guide book to the Buddha's India. With illustrations.

How To Protect Yourself From Cults

Contemporary society has given rise to numerous new religions and religious denominations. While

most of these are benign, others of them pose a real threat to people's mental health and spiritual development. In this book, the author describes the main characteristics of cults, the techniques they use to recruit new converts and how one can deal with their aggressiveness and deception. A book that every concerned Buddhist should read.

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